

ADVENTURES

OF

CALEB WILLIAMS.



THINGS AS THEY ARE:

OR, THE

Struggle

ADVENTURES

OF

CALEB WILLIAMS.

BY WILLIAM GODWIN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

Amidst the woods the leopard knows his kind;
The tyger preys not on the tyger brood:
Man only is the common foe of man.

D U B L I N:

Printed by Robert Harchbank,

FOR

JOHN RICE, No. 2, COLLEGE-GREEN.

1795.

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CALEB WILLIAMS.

C H A P. I.

HE began: It has been the principle of my life never to inflict a wilful injury upon any thing that lives; I need not express my regret when I find myself obliged to be the promulgator of a criminal charge. How gladly would I pass unnoticed the evil I have sustained! but I owe it to society to detect an offender, and prevent other men from being imposed upon, as I have been, by an appearance of integrity.

It would be better, interrupted Mr. Forester, to speak directly to the point. We ought not, though

though unwarily, by apologising for ourselves, to create at such a time a prejudice against an individual, against whom a criminal accusation will always be prejudice enough.

I strongly suspect, continued Mr. Falkland, this young man, who has been peculiarly the object of my kindness, of having robbed me to a considerable amount.

What, replied Mr. Forester, are the grounds of your suspicion?

The first of them is the actual loss I have sustained in notes, jewels and plate. I have missed bank notes to the amount of nine hundred pounds, three gold repeaters of extraordinary value, a complete suit of diamonds the property of my late mother, and several other articles.

And why, continued my arbitrator, astonishment, grief, and a desire to retain his self-possession strongly contending in his countenance and voice, do you fix on this young man as the instrument of the depredation?

I found him, on my coming home upon the day when every thing was in disorder from the alarm of fire, in the very act of quitting the private apartment where these things were deposited. He was confounded at seeing me, and hastened to withdraw as soon as he possibly could.

Did you say nothing to him, take no notice of the confusion your sudden appearance produced?

I asked what was his errand in that place. He was at first so terrified and overcome that he could not answer me. Afterwards with a good deal of faltering he said that, when all the servants were engaged in endeavouring to save the most valuable part of my property, he had come hither with the same view; but that he had as yet removed nothing.

Did



Did you immediately examine to see that every thing was safe?

No. I was accustomed to confide in his honesty, and I was suddenly called away in the present instance to attend to the increasing progress of the flames. I therefore only took out the key from the door of the apartment, having first locked it, and, putting it in my pocket, hastened to go where my presence seemed indispensably necessary.

How long was it before you missed your property?

The same evening. The hurry of the scene had driven the circumstance entirely out of my mind, till, going by accident near the apartment, the whole affair, together with the singular and equivocal behaviour of Williams, rushed at once upon my recollection. I immediately entered, examined the chest in which these things were contained, and to my astonishment found the locks broken and the property gone.

What steps did you take upon this discovery?

I sent for Williams, and talked to him very seriously upon the subject. But he had now perfectly recovered his self-command, and calmly and stoutly denied all knowledge of the matter. I urged him with the enormoufness of the offence, but it made no impression. He did not discover either the surprise and indignation one would have expected from a person entirely innocent, or the uneasiness that generally attends upon guilt. He was rather silent and reserved. I then informed him, that I should proceed in a manner different from what he might perhaps expect. I would not, as is too frequent in such cases, make a general research, for I had rather lose my property for ever without redress, than expose a multitude of innocent persons to anxiety and injustice. My suspicion
for

for the present unavoidably fixed upon him. But in a matter of so great consequence I was determined not to act upon suspicion. I would neither incur the possibility of ruining him being innocent, nor be the instrument of exposing others to his depredations, if guilty. I should therefore merely insist upon his continuing in my service. He might depend upon it he should be well watched, and I trusted the whole truth would eventually appear. Since he avoided confession now, I advised him to consider how far it was likely he would come off with impunity at last. This I was determined on, that the moment he attempted an escape, I would consider that as an indication of guilt and proceed accordingly.

What circumstances have occurred from that time to the present?

None upon which I can infer a certainty of guilt. Several that agree to favour a suspicion. From that time Williams was perpetually uneasy in his situation, always desirous, as it now appears, to escape, but afraid to adopt such a measure without certain precautions. It was not long after, that you, Mr. Forester, became my visitor. I observed with dissatisfaction the growing intercourse between you, reflecting on the equivocalness of his character, and the attempt he would probably make to render you the dupe of his hypocrisy. I accordingly threatened him severely, and I believe you observed the change that presently after took place in his behaviour with relation to you.

I did, and it appeared at that time mysterious and extraordinary.

Some time after, as you well know, a rencounter took place between you, whether accidental or intentional on his part I am not able to say, when he confessed to you the uneasiness of his mind without
discovering

discovering the cause, and openly proposed to you to assist him in his flight; and stand in case of necessity between him and my resentment. You offered, it seems, to take him into your service, but nothing, as he acknowledged, would answer his purpose, that did not place his retreat wholly out of my power to discover.

Did it not appear extraordinary to you that he should hope for any effectual protection from me, while it remained perpetually in your power to satisfy me of his unworthiness?

Perhaps he had hopes that I should not proceed to that step, at least so long as the place of his retreat should be unknown to me, and of consequence the event of my proceeding dubious. Perhaps he confided in his own powers, which are far from contemptible, to construct a plausible tale, especially as he had taken care to have the first impression in his favour. After all, this protection on your part was merely reserved in case all other expedients failed. He does not appear to have had any other sentiment upon the subject, than that, if he were defeated in his projects for placing himself beyond the reach of justice, it was better to have bespoken himself a place in your patronage than to be destitute of every resource.

Mr. Falkland having thus finished his evidence, called upon Robert, the valet, to confirm that part of it which related to the day of the fire.

Robert stated, that he happened to be coming through the library that day, a few minutes after Mr. Falkland's being brought home by the sight of the fire, that he had found me standing there with every mark of perturbation and fright, that he was so struck with my appearance that he could not help stopping to notice it, that he had spoken to me two or three times before he could obtain an answer,

and that all he could get from me at last, was that I was the most miserable creature alive.

He farther said, that in the evening of the same day Mr. Falkland called him into the private apartment adjoining to the library, and bid him bring him a hammer and some nails. He then showed him a chest standing in the apartment with its locks and fastenings broken, and ordered him to observe and remember what he saw, but not to mention it to any one. Robert did not at that time know what Mr. Falkland intended by these directions; but he entertained no doubt that the fastenings were broken and wrenched by the application of a chissel or such like instrument with the intention of forcibly opening the chest.

Mr. Forester observed upon this evidence, that as much of it as related to the day of the fire seemed indeed to afford powerful reasons for suspicion, and that the circumstances that had occurred since strangely concurred to fortify that suspicion. Meantime, that nothing proper to be done might be omitted, he proposed searching my boxes to see whether by that means any trace could be discovered to confirm the imputation. Mr. Falkland treated this suggestion slightly, saying that, if I were the thief, I had no doubt taken the precaution to obviate so palpable a means of detection. To this Mr. Forester only replied, that conjecture, however skilfully formed, was not always realised in the actions and behaviour of mankind; and ordered that my boxes and trunks should be brought into the library. The two that were first opened contained nothing to confirm the accusation against me; in the third were found a watch and several jewels that were immediately known to be the property of Mr. Falkland. The production of this seemingly decisive evidence excited emotions of astonishment and

and concern : but no person's astonishment appeared to be greater than that of Mr. Falkland.

To the rest of the persons present I seemed to be merely the subject of detection ; but in reality I was of all the spectators that individual who was most at a loss to conceive through every stage of the scene what would come next, and who listened to every word that was uttered with the most uncontrollable amazement. Amazement however alternately yielded the ascendancy to indignation and horror. At first I could not refrain from repeatedly attempting to interrupt ; but I was checked in these attempts by Mr. Forester, and I presently felt how necessary it was to my future peace that I should collect the whole energy of my mind to repel the charge, and assert my innocence.

Every thing being now produced that could be produced against me, Mr. Forester turned to me with a look of concern and pity, and told me that now was the time if I chose to allege any thing in my defence. In reply to this invitation I spoke nearly as follows :

I am innocent. It is in vain that circumstances are accumulated against me : there is not a person upon earth less capable than I of the things of which I am accused. I appeal to my heart ; I appeal to my looks ; I appeal to every sentiment my tongue ever uttered.

I could perceive that the fervour with which I spoke made some impression upon every one that heard me. But in a moment their eyes were turned upon the property that lay before them, and their countenances changed. I proceeded :

One thing more I must aver ; Mr. Falkland is not deceived ; he perfectly knows that I am innocent.

I had

I had no sooner uttered these words than an involuntary cry of indignation burst from every person in the room. Mr. Forester turned to me with a look of extreme severity, and said :

Young man, consider well what you are doing ! It is the privilege of the party accused to say whatever he thinks proper ; and I will take care that you shall enjoy that privilege in its utmost extent. But do you think it will conduce in any respect to your benefit to throw out such insolent and intolerable insinuations ?

I thank you most sincerely, replied I, for your caution ; but I well know what it is that I am doing. I make this averment not merely because it is solemnly true, but because it is inseparably connected with my vindication. I am the party accused, and I shall be told that I am not to be believed in my own defence. I can produce no other witnesses of my innocence ; I therefore call upon Mr. Falkland to be my evidence. I ask him,

Did you never boast to me in private of your power to ruin me ? Did you never say that, if once I brought on myself the weight of your displeasure, my fall should be irreparable ? Did you not tell me that, though I should prepare in that case a tale ever so plausible or ever so true, you would take care that the whole world should execrate me as an impostor ? Were not those your very words ? Did you not add that my innocence should be of no service to me, and that you laughed at so feeble a defence ? I ask you farther, Did you not receive a letter from me the morning of the day on which I departed, requesting your consent to my departure ? Should I have done that, if my flight had been that of a thief ? I challenge any man to reconcile the expressions of that letter with this accusation. Should I have begun with stating that
I had

I had conceived a desire to quit your service, if my desire and the reasons for it had been of the nature that is now alledged? Should I have dared to ask for what reason I was thus subjected to an eternal penance?

Saying this, I took out a copy of my letter and laid it open upon the table.

Mr. Falkland returned no immediate answer to my interrogations. Mr. Forester turned to him, and said, Well, sir, what is your reply to this challenge of your servant?

Mr. Falkland answered: Such a mode of defence hardly stands in need of a reply. But I answer, I held no such conversation; I never used such words; I received no such letter. Surely it is no sufficient rebutter of a criminal charge, that the criminal repels what is alledged against him with volubility of speech and intrepidity of manner?

Mr. Forester then turned to me. If, said he, you trust your vindication to the plausibility of your tale, you must take care to render it consistent and complete. You have not told us what was the cause of the confusion and anxiety in which Robert professes to have found you, why you were so impatient to quit the service of Mr. Falkland, or how you account for certain articles of his property being found in your possession?

All that, sir, answered I, is true. There are certain parts of my story that I have not told. If they were told, they would not contribute to my disadvantage, and they would make the present accusation appear still more astonishing. But I cannot, as yet at least, prevail upon myself to tell them. Is it necessary to give any particular and precise reasons why I should wish to change the place of my residence? You all of you know the unfortunate state of Mr. Falkland's mind. You know the sternness,

sternness, reservedness and distance of his manners. If I had no other reasons, surely it would afford small presumption of criminality that I should wish to change his service for another.

The question of how these articles of Mr. Falkland's property came to be found in my possession is more material. It is a question I am wholly unable to answer. Their being found there was at least as unexpected to me as to any one of the persons now present. I only know that, as I have the most perfect assurance of Mr. Falkland's being conscious of my innocence, for, observe! I do not shrink from that assertion, I reiterate it with new confidence; I therefore firmly and from my soul believe that their being there is of Mr. Falkland's contrivance.

I had no sooner said this, than I was again interrupted by an involuntary exclamation from every one present. They looked at me with furious glances, as if they could have torn me to pieces. I proceeded:

I have now answered every thing that is alleged against me.

Mr. Forester, you are a lover of justice; I conjure you not to violate it in my person. You are a man of penetration; look at me, do you see any of the marks of guilt? Recollect all that has ever passed under your observation; is it compatible with a mind capable of what is now alleged against me? Could a real criminal have shown himself so unabashed, composed and firm as I have now done?

Fellow servants! Mr. Falkland is a man of rank and fortune; he is your master. I am a poor country lad without a friend in the world. That is a ground of real difference to a certain extent; but it is not a sufficient ground for the subversion
of

of justice. Remember, that I am in a situation that is not to be trifled with, that a decision given against me now, in a case in which I solemnly assure you I am innocent, will for ever deprive me of reputation and peace of mind, combine the whole world in a league against me, and determine perhaps upon my liberty and my life. If you believe, if you see, if you know that I am innocent, speak for me. Do not suffer a pusillanimous timidity to prevent you from saving a fellow creature from destruction, who does not deserve to have a human being for his enemy. Why have we the power of speech, but to communicate our thoughts? I will never believe that a man conscious of innocence, cannot make other men perceive that he has that thought. Do not you feel that my whole heart tells me, I am not guilty of what is imputed to me?

To you, Mr. Falkland, I have nothing to say. I know you, and know that you are impenetrable. At the very moment that you are urging such odious charges against me, you admire my resolution and forbearance. But I have nothing to hope from you. You can look upon my ruin without pity or remorse. I am most unfortunate indeed in having to do with such an adversary. You oblige me to say ill things of you; but I appeal to your own heart whether it is not in my power to say infinitely worse.

Every thing that could be alleged on either side being now concluded, Mr. Forester undertook to make some remarks upon the whole. Williams, said he, the charge against you is heavy; the direct evidence is strong; the corroborating circumstances are numerous and striking. I grant that you have shown considerable dexterity in your answers; but you will learn, young man, to your cost,

cost, that dexterity, however powerful it may be in certain cases, will avail little against the stubbornness of truth. It is fortunate for mankind that the empire of talents has its limitations, and that it is not in the power of ingenuity to subvert the distinctions of right and wrong. Take my word for it, that the true merits of the case against you will be too strong for sophistry to overturn, that justice will prevail, and impotent malice be defeated.

To you, Mr. Falkland, society is obliged for having placed this black affair in its true light. Do not suffer the malignant aspersions of the criminal to give you any uneasiness. Depend upon it that they will be found of no weight. I have no doubt that your character in the judgment of every person that has heard them stands higher than ever. We feel for your misfortune in being obliged to hear such calumnies from a person who has injured you so grossly. But you must be considered in that respect as a martyr in the public cause. The purity of your motives and dispositions are beyond the reach of malice; and truth and equity will not fail to award to your calumniator infamy, and to you the love and approbation of mankind.

I have now told you, Williams, what I think of your case. But I have no right to assume to be your ultimate judge. Desperate as it appears to me, I will give you one piece of advice as if I were retained as a counsel to assist you. Leave out of it whatever tells to the disadvantage of Mr. Falkland. Defend yourself as well as you can, but do not attack your master. It is your business to create in those that hear you a prepossession in your favour. But the recrimination you have been now practising will always create indignation.

tion. Dishonesty will admit of some palliation. The deliberate malice you have now been showing is a thousand times more atrocious. It proves you to have the mind of a demon rather than a felon. Wherever you shall repeat it, those who hear you will pronounce you guilty upon that, even if the proper evidence against you were glaringly defective. If therefore you would consult your interest, which seems to be your only consideration, it is incumbent upon you by all means immediately to retract that. If you desire to be believed honest, you must in the first place show that you have a due sense of merit in others. You cannot better serve your cause than by begging pardon of your master, and doing homage to rectitude and worth even when they are employed in vengeance against you.

It is easy to conceive that my mind sustained an extreme shock from the decision of Mr. Forester; but his call upon me to retract and humble myself before my accuser penetrated my whole soul with indignation. I answered:

I have already told you I am innocent. I believe that I could not endure the effort of inventing a plausible defence, if it were otherwise. You have just affirmed that it is not in the power of ingenuity to subvert the distinctions of right and wrong, and in that very moment I find them subverted. This is indeed to me a very awful moment. New to the world, I know nothing of its affairs but what has reached me by rumour, or is recorded in books. I have come into it with all the ardour and confidence inseparable from my years. In every fellow-being I expected to find a friend. I am unpractised in its wiles, and have even no acquaintance with its injustice. I have done nothing to deserve the animosity of mankind, but

but, if I may judge from the present scene, I am from henceforth to be deprived of the benefits of integrity and honour. I am to forfeit the friendship of every one I have hitherto known, and to be precluded from the power of acquiring that of others. I must therefore be reduced to derive my satisfaction from myself. Depend upon it I will not begin that career by dishonourable concessions. If I am to despair of the good will of other men, I will at least maintain the independence of my own mind. Mr. Falkland is my implacable enemy. Whatever may be his merits in other respects, he is acting towards me without humanity, without remorse and without principle. Do you think I will ever make any submissions to a man by whom I am thus treated, that I will fall down at the feet of one who is to me a devil, or kiss the hand that is red with my blood?

In that respect, answered Mr. Forester, do as you shall think proper. I must confess that your firmness and consistency astonish me. They add something to what I had conceived of human powers. Perhaps you have chosen the part which all things considered may serve your purpose best, though I think more moderation would be more conciliating. The exterior of innocence will, I grant, stagger the persons who may have the direction of your fate, but it will never be able to prevail against plain and incontrovertible facts. But I have done with you. I see in you a new instance of that abuse which is so generally made of talents the admiration of an undiscerning public. I regard you with horror. And all that remains is that I should discharge my duty in consigning you as a monster of depravity to the justice of your country.

No,

No, rejoined Mr. Falkland, to that I can never consent. I have put a restraint upon myself thus far, because it was right that evidence and enquiry should take their course. I have suppressed all my habits and sentiments, because it seemed due to the public that hypocrisy should be unmasked. But I can suffer this violence no longer. I have through my whole life interfered to protect, not overbear the sufferer; and I must do so now. I feel not the smallest resentment of his impotent attacks upon my character; I smile at their malice; and they make no diminution in my benevolence to their author. Let him say what he pleases; he cannot hurt me. It was proper that he should be brought to public shame, that other people might not be deceived by him as we have been. But there is no necessity for proceeding any farther; and I must insist upon it that he be permitted to depart wherever he pleases. I am sorry that public interest affords so gloomy a prospect for his future happiness.

Mr. Falkland, answered Mr. Forester, these sentiments do honour to your humanity; but I must not give way to them. They only serve to set in a stronger light the venom of this serpent, this monster of ingratitude, who first robs his benefactor, and then reviles him. Wretch that you are, will nothing move you? Are you inaccessible to remorse? Are you not struck to the heart with the unmerited goodness of your master? Vile calumniator! you are the abhorrence of nature, the opprobrium of the human species, and the earth can only be freed from an insupportable burthen by your being exterminated! Recollect, sir, that this villain, at the very moment that you are exercising such unexampled forbearance in his behalf, has the presumption to charge you with prosecuting

secuting a crime of which you know him to be innocent, nay, with having conveyed the pretended stolen goods among his property for the express purpose of ruining him. By this unexampled villainy he makes it your duty to free the world from such a pest, and your interest to admit no relaxing in your pursuit of him, lest the world should be persuaded by your clemency to credit his vile insinuations.

I care not for consequences, replied Mr. Falkland, I will obey the dictates of my own mind. I will never lend my personal assistance to the reforming mankind by axes and gibbets; I am sure things will never go well, till honour and not law be the dictator of mankind, till vice is taught to shrink before the resistless might of inborn dignity, and not before the cold formality of statutes. If my calumniator were worthy of my resentment I would chastise him with my own sword, and not that of the magistrate; but in the present case I smile at his malice, and resolve to spare him, as the generous lord of the forest spares the insect that would disturb his repose.

The language you now hold, said Mr. Forester, is that of romance, and not of reason. Yet I cannot but be struck with the contrast exhibited before me of the magnanimity of virtue and the obstinate, impenetrable injustice of guilt. While your mind overflows with goodness, nothing can touch the heart of this thrice-bred villain. I shall never forgive myself for having once been entrapped by his detestable arts. This is no time for us to settle the question between chivalry and law. I shall therefore simply insist as a magistrate, having taken the evidence in this felony, upon my right and duty of following the course of justice, and committing the accused to the county jail.

After

After some farther contest Mr. Falkland, finding Mr. Forester obstinate and impracticable, withdrew his opposition. Accordingly a proper officer was summoned from the neighbouring village, a mittimus made out, and one of Mr. Falkland's carriages prepared to conduct me to the place of custody. It will easily be imagined that this sudden reverse was very painfully felt by me. I looked round on the servants who had been the spectators of my examinations, but not one of them either by word or gesture expressed any compassion for my calamity. The robbery of which I was accused appeared to them atrocious from its magnitude, and whatever sparks of compassion might otherwise have sprung up in their ingenuous and undisciplined minds, were totally obliterated by indignation at my supposed profligacy in recriminating upon their worthy and excellent master. My fate being already determined, and one of the servants dispatched for the officer, Mr. Forester and Mr. Falkland withdrew, and left me in the custody of two others.

One of these was the servant who had gone in pursuit of me and found me at the market-town from whence I had intended to take coach for London. I was willing accurately to discover the state of mind of those who had been witnesses of this scene, and who had had some previous opportunity of observing my character and manners. I therefore endeavoured to open a conversation with him. Well, my good Thomas, said I, in a querulous tone and with a hesitating manner, am I not a most miserable creature?

Do not speak to me, master Williams! You have given me a shock that I shall not get the better of for one while. You were hatched by a hen, as the saying is, but you came of the spawn of a cockatrice. I am glad to my heart, that honest farmer

Williams

Williams is dead, your villany would else have made him curse the day that ever he was born.

Thomas, I am innocent ! I swear by the great God that shall judge me another day, I am innocent !

Pray, do not swear ! for goodness sake, do not swear ! Your poor soul is damned enough without that. For your sake, lad, I will never take any body's word, nor trust to appearances, tho' it should be an angel. Lord bless us ! how smoothly you palavered it over, for all the world as if you had been as fair as a new-born babe ! But it will not do ; you will never be able to persuade people that black is white. For my own part I have done with you. I loved you yesterday, all one as if you had been my own brother. To day I love you so well, that I would go ten miles with all the pleasure in life to see you hanged.

Good God ! Thomas, have you the heart ? What a change ! I call God to witness I have done nothing to deserve it ! What a world do we live in !

Hold your tongue, boy ! It makes my very heart sick to hear you ! I would not lay a night under the same roof with you for all the world ! I should expect the house to fall and crush such wickedness ! I admire that the earth does not open and swallow you alive ! It is poison so much as to look at you ! If you go on at this hardened rate, I believed from my soul that the people you talk to will tear you to pieces, and you will never live to come to the gallows. Oh, yes, you do well to pity yourself : poor, tender thing ! that spit venom all round you like a toad, and leave the very ground upon which you crawl infected with your slime.

Finding the person with whom I talked thus impenetrable to all I could say, and considering that the advantage to be gained was but small even if I could

could overcome his prepossession, I took his advice and was silent. It was not much longer before every thing was prepared for my departure, and I was conducted to the same prison which had so lately inclosed the wretched and innocent Hawkinses. They too had been the victims of Mr. Falkland. He exhibited, upon a very contracted scale indeed, but in which the truth of delineation was faithfully sustained, a copy of what monarchs are, who reckon among the instruments of their power prisons of state.

CHAP. II.

FOR my own part I had never seen a prison, and like the majority of my brethren had given myself little concern to enquire what was the condition of those who committed offence against, or became obnoxious to suspicion from the community. Oh, how enviable is the most tottering shed under which the labourer retires to rest, compared with the residence of these walls!

To me every thing was new, the massy doors, the resounding locks, the gloomy passages, the grated windows, and the characteristic looks of the keepers, accustomed to reject every petition, and to steel their hearts against feeling and pity. Curiosity and a sense of my situation induced me to fix my eyes on the faces of these men, but in a few minutes I drew them away with unconquerable loathing. It is impossible to describe the sort of squalidness and filth with which these mansions are distinguished. I have seen dirty faces in dirty apartments, which have nevertheless borne the impression of health, and spoke carelessness and levity rather than distress. But the dirt of a prison speaks sadness to the heart, and appears to be already in a state of putridity and infection.

I was detained for more than an hour in the apartment of the keeper, one turnkey after another coming in, that they might make themselves familiar with my person. As I was already considered

as guilty of felony to a considerable amount, I underwent a rigorous search, and they took from me a penknife, a pair of scissors, and that part of my money which was in gold. It was debated whether or not these should be sealed up, to be returned to me, as they said, as soon as I should be acquitted; and had I not displayed an unexpected firmness of manner and vigour of expostulation, such was the conduct that would have been pursued. Having undergone these ceremonies, I was thrust into a day-room in which all the persons then under confinement for felony were assembled, to the number of eleven. Each of them was too much engaged in his own reflections to take notice of me. Of these two were imprisoned for horse-stealing, and three for having stolen a sheep, one for shop-lifting, one for coining, two for highway-robbery and two for burglary.

The horse-stealers were engaged in a game at cards, which was presently interrupted by a difference of opinion, attended with great vociferation, they calling upon one and another to decide it to no purpose, one paying no attention to their summons, and another leaving them in the midst of their story, being no longer able to endure his own internal anguish in the midst of their mumery.

It is a custom among thieves to constitute a sort of mock tribunal of their own body, from whose decision every one is informed whether he shall be acquitted, respited or pardoned, as well as respecting the most skilful way of conducting his defence. One of the housebreakers who had already passed this ordeal was stalking up and down the room with a forced bravery, exclaiming to his companion that he was as rich as the duke of Bedford himself. He had five guineas and a half, which was as much

as he could possibly spend in the course of the ensuing month, and what happened after that it was Jack Ketch's business to see to, not his. As he uttered these words he threw himself abruptly upon a bench that was near him, and seemed to be asleep in a moment. But his sleep was uneasy and disturbed, his breathing was hard, and at intervals had rather the nature of a groan. A young fellow from the other side of the room came softly to the place where he lay with a large knife in his hand, and pressed the back of it with such violence upon his neck, the head hanging over the side of the bench, that it was not till after several efforts that he was able to rise. Oh, Jack ! cried this manual jester, I had almost done your business for you ! The other expressed no marks of resentment, but sullenly answered, Damn you, why did not you take the edge ? It would have been the best thing you have done this many a day * !

The case of one of the persons committed for highway-robbery was not a little extraordinary. He was a common foldier, of a most engaging physiognomy, and two and twenty years of age. The prosecutor, who had been robbed one evening as he returned very late from the alehouse, of the sum of three shillings, swore positively to his person. The character of the prisoner was such as has seldom been equalled. The meanness of his condition did not preclude him from the pursuit of intellectual cultivation ; and he drew his favourite amusement from the works of Virgil and Horace. His integrity had been proverbially great. In one instance he had been employed by a lady to convey a sum of a thousand pounds to a person at some miles

* This incident really occurred, and was witnessed by a friend of the author a few years since in Newgate.

miles distance: in another he was intrusted by a gentleman during his absence with the care of his house and furniture to the value of at least five times that sum. His habits of thinking were peculiar, full of justice, simplicity and wisdom. He from time to time earned money of his officers by his peculiar excellence in furbishing arms; but he declined offers that had been made him to become a serjeant or a corporal, saying, that he did not want money, and that in a new situation he should have less leisure for study. He was equally constant in refusing presents that were offered him by persons that had been struck with his merit: not that he was under the influence of false delicacy and pride, but that his conscience would not allow him to accept that, the want of which he did not feel to be an evil. This man died while I was in prison. I received his last breath*.

The whole day I was obliged to spend in the company of these men, some of them having really committed the actions laid to their charge, others whom their ill fortune had rendered the victims of suspicion. The whole was a scene of misery such as nothing short of actual observation can suggest to the mind. Some were noisy and obstreperous, endeavouring by a false bravery to keep at bay the remembrance of their condition; while others, incapable even of this effort, had the torment of their thoughts aggravated by the perpetual noise and confusion that prevailed around them. In the faces of those who assumed the most courage you might trace the furrows of anxious care, and in the midst of their laboured hilarity dreadful ideas would ever and anon intrude, convulsing their features and

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working

* A story extremely similar to this is to be found in the Newgate Calendar, Vol. I. p. 382.

working every line into an expression of the keenest agony. To these men the sun brought no return of joy. Day after day rolled on, but their state was immutable. Existence was to them a theatre of invariable melancholy; every moment was a moment of anguish, yet did they wish to prolong that moment, fearful that the coming period would bring a severer fate. They thought of the past with insupportable repentance, each man contented to give his right hand, to have again the choice of that peace and liberty which he had unthinkingly bartered away. We talk of instruments of torture; Englishmen take credit to themselves for having banished the use of them from their happy shore! Alas, he that has observed the secrets of a prison, well knows that there is infinitely more torture in the lingering existence of a criminal, in the silent, intolerable minutes that he spends, than in the tangible misery of whips and racks!

Such were our days. At sun-set our jailors appeared, and ordered each man to come away, and be locked into his dungeon. It was a bitter aggravation of our fate to be under the arbitrary controul of these fellows. They felt no man's sorrow; they were of all men least capable of any sort of feeling. They had a barbarous and fullen pleasure in issuing their detested mandates, and observing the mournful reluctance with which they were obeyed. Whatever they directed, it was in vain to expostulate; fetters and bread and water were the sure consequences of resistance. Their tyranny had no other limit than their own caprice; to whom shall the unfortunate felon appeal? To what purpose complain, when his complaints are sure to be received with incredulity? A tale of mutiny and necessary precaution is the unfailing refuge

refuge of the keeper, and this tale is an everlasting bar against redress.

Our dungeons were cells, $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet by $6\frac{1}{2}$, below the surface of the ground, damp, without window, light or air, except from a few holes worked for that purpose in the door. In some of these miserable receptacles three persons were put to sleep together*. I was fortunate enough to have one to myself. It was now the approach of winter. We were not allowed to have candles; and, as I have already said, were thrust in here at sun-set and not liberated till the returning day. This was our situation for fourteen or fifteen hours out of the four and twenty. I had never been accustomed to sleep more than six or seven hours, and my inclination to sleep was now less than ever. Thus was I reduced to spend half my day in this dreary abode and in compleat darkness. This was no trifling aggravation of my lot.

Among my melancholy reflections I tasked my memory, and counted over the doors, the locks, the chains, the massy walls and grated windows that were between me and liberty. These, said I, are the engines that tyranny sits down in cold and serious meditation to invent. This is the empire that man exercises over man. Thus is a being, formed to expatiate, to act, to smile and enjoy, restricted and benumbed. How great must be his depravity or heedlessness who vindicates this scheme for changing health and gaiety and serenity, into the wanness of a dungeon and the deep furrows of agony and despair!

Thank God, exclaims the Englishman, we have no Bastille! Thank God, with us no man can be punished without a crime! Unthinking wretch!

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* See Howard on Prisons.

Is that a country of liberty where thousands languish in dungeons and fetters? Go, go, ignorant fool! and visit the scenes of our prisons! witness their unwholesomeness, their filth, the tyranny of their governors, the misery of their inmates! After that shew me the man shameless enough to triumph, and say, England has no Bastille! Is there any charge so frivolous upon which men are not consigned to these detested abodes? Is there any villainy that is not practised by justices and prosecutors? But against all this, perhaps you have been told, there is redress. Yes, a redress, that it is the consummation of insult so much as to name! Where shall the poor wretch, reduced to the last despair, and to whom acquittal perhaps comes just time enough to save him from perishing,—where shall this man find leisure, and much less money, to see counsel and officers, and purchase the tedious, dear-bought remedy of the law? No, he is too happy to leave his dungeon and the memory of his dungeon behind him; and the same tyranny and wanton oppression become the inheritance of his successor.

For myself I looked round upon my walls, and forward upon the premature death I had too much reason to expect; I consulted my own heart that whispered nothing but innocence; and I said, This is society. This is the object, the distribution of justice, which is the end of human reason. For this sages have toiled, and the midnight oil has been wasted. This!

The reader will forgive this digression from the immediate subject of my story. If it should be said, these are general remarks; let it be remembered that they are the dear-bought result of experience. It is from the fulness of a bursting heart that invective thus flows to my pen. These
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are not the declamations of a man desirous to be eloquent. I have felt the iron slavery grating upon my soul.

I believed that misery, more pure than that which I now endured, had never fallen to the lot of a human being. I recollected with astonishment my puerile eagerness to be brought to the test and have my innocence examined. I execrated it as the vilest and most insufferable pedantry. I exclaimed in the bitterness of my heart, Of what value is a fair fame? It is the jewel of men formed to be amused with baubles. Without it I might have had serenity of heart and cheerfulness of occupation, peace and liberty; why should I consign my happiness to other men's arbitration? But, if a fair fame were of the most inexpressible value, is this the method which common sense would prescribe to retrieve it? The language which these institutions hold out to the unfortunate is, Come, and be shut out from the light of day, be the associate of those whom society has marked out for her abhorrence, be the slave of jailers, be loaded with fetters; thus shall you be cleared from every unworthy aspersion, and restored to reputation and honour! This is the consolation she affords to those whose malignity or folly, private pique or unfounded positiveness have without the smallest foundation loaded with calumny. For myself I felt my own innocence, and I soon found upon enquiry that three-fourths of those who are regularly subjected to a similar treatment, are persons, whom even with all the superciliousness and precipitation of our courts of justice no evidence can be found to convict. How slender then must be that man's portion of information and discernment, who is willing to commit his character and welfare to such guardianship!

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But my case was even worse than this. I intimately felt that a trial, such as institution is able to make it, is only the worthy sequel of such a beginning. What chance had I, after the purgation I was now suffering, that I should come out acquitted at last? What probability was there that the trial I had just endured in the house of Mr. Falkland was not just as fair as any that might be expected to follow? No, I have already anticipated my own condemnation.

Thus was I cut off for ever from all that existence has to bestow, from all the high hopes I had so often conceived, from all the future excellence my soul so much delighted to imagine, to spend a few weeks in a miserable prison, and then to perish by the hands of the public executioner. No language can do justice to the indignant and soul-sickening loathing that these ideas excited. My resentment was not restricted to my prosecutor, but extended itself to take in the whole machine of human society. I could never believe that all this was the fair result of institutions inseparable from the general good. I regarded the whole human species as so many hangmen and torturers. I considered them as confederated to tear me to pieces; and this wide scene of inexorable persecution inflicted upon me inexpressible agony. I looked on this side and on that; I was innocent, I had a right to expect assistance; but every heart was ready to lend its force to make my ruin secure. No man that has not felt in his own most momentous concerns justice, eternal truth, unalterable equity engaged in his behalf; and on the other side brute force, impenetrable obstinacy and unfeeling insolence, can imagine the sensations that then passed through my mind. I saw treachery triumphant and enthroned; I saw the sinews of innocence crumbled into dust by the gripe of almighty guilt.

What

What relief had I from these sensations? Was it relief that I spent the day in the midst of profligacy and execrations, that I saw reflected from every countenance agonies only inferior to my own? He that would form a lively idea of the regions of the damned, needed only to witness for six hours a scene to which I was confined for many months. Not for one hour could I withdraw myself from this complexity of horrors, or take refuge in the calmness of meditation. Air, exercise, series, contrast, those grand enliveners of the human frame, I was for ever debarred, by the inexorable tyranny under which I was fallen. Nor did I find the solitude of my nightly dungeon less insupportable. Its only furniture was the straw that served me for my repose. It was narrow, damp and unwholesome. The slumbers of a mind, wearied like mine with the most detestable uniformity, to whom neither amusement nor occupation ever offered themselves to beguile the painful hours, were short, disturbed and unrefreshing. My sleeping, still more than my waking thoughts, were full of perplexity, deformity and disorder. To these slumbers succeeded the hours which by the regulations of our prison I was obliged though awake to spend in solitary and cheerless darkness. Here I had neither books, nor pens, nor any thing upon which to engage my attention; all was a sightless blank. How was a mind, active and indefatigable like mine, to endure this misery? I could not sink it in lethargy; I could not forget my woes; they haunted me with unintermitted and demoniac malice. Cruel, inexorable policy of human affairs, that condemns a man to torture like this; that sanctions it and knows not what is done under its sanction; that is too supine and unfeeling to enquire into these petty details; that calls this

the ordeal of innocence and the protector of freedom ! A thousand times I could have dashed my brains against the walls of my dungeon ; a thousand times I longed for death, and wished with inexpressible ardour for an end to what I suffered ; a thousand times I meditated suicide, and ruminated in the bitterness of my soul upon the different means of escaping from the load of existence. What had I to do with life ? I had seen enough to make me regard it with detestation. Why should I wait the lingering process of legal despotism, and not dare so much as to die but when and how its instruments decreed ? Still some inexplicable suggestion withheld my hand. I clung with desperate fondness to this shadow of existence, its mysterious attractions and its hopeless prospects.

C H A P. III.

SUCH were the reflections that haunted the first days of my imprisonment, in consequence of which they were spent in perpetual anguish. But after a time nature, wearied with distress, would no longer stoop to the burthen; thought, which is incessantly varying, introduced a series of reflections totally different.

My fortitude revived. I had always been accustomed to cheerfulness, good-humour and serenity, and this habit now returned to visit me at the bottom of my dungeon. No sooner did my contemplations take this turn, than I saw the reasonableness and possibility of tranquillity and peace, and my mind whispered to me the propriety of showing in this forlorn condition that I was superior to all my persecutors. Blessed state of innocence and self-approbation! The sunshine of conscious integrity pierced through all the barriers of my cell, and spoke ten thousand times more joy to my heart than the accumulated splendours of nature and art can communicate to the slaves of vice.

I found out the secret of employing my mind. I said, I am shut up for half the day in total darkness without any external source of amusement; the other half I spend in the midst of noise, turbulence and confusion. What then? Can I not draw amusement from the stores of my own mind? Is it not freighted with various knowledge? Have I not been employed from my infancy in gratifying an insatiable curiosity? When should I derive benefit

nefit from these superior advantages, if not at present? Accordingly I tasked the stores of my memory and my powers of invention. I amused myself with recollecting the history of my life. By degrees I called to mind a number of minute circumstances which but for this exercise would have been for ever forgotten. I repassed in my thoughts whole conversations, I recollected their subjects, their arrangement, their incidents and frequently their very words. I mused upon these ideas till I was totally absorbed in thought. I repeated them till my mind glowed with enthusiasm. I had my different employments fitted for the solitude of the night in which I could give full scope to the impulses of my mind, and the uproar of the day in which my chief object was to be insensible to the disorder with which I was surrounded.

By degrees I quitted my own story, and amused myself with imaginary adventures. I figured to myself every situation in which I could be placed, and conceived the conduct to be observed in each. Thus scenes of insult and danger, of tenderness and oppression became familiar to me. In fancy I often passed the awful hour of dissolving nature. In some of my reveries I boiled with impetuous indignation, and in others patiently collected the whole force of my mind for some fearful encounter. I cultivated the powers of oratory suited to these different states, and improved more in eloquence in the solitude of my dungeon, than perhaps I should have done in the busiest and most crowded scenes. At length I proceeded to as regular a disposition of my time, as the man in his study who passes from mathematics to poetry, and from poetry to the law of nations in the different parts of each single day; and I as seldom infringed upon my plan. Nor were my subjects of disquisition

sition less numerous than his. I went over, by the assistance of memory only, a considerable part of Euclid during my confinement, and revived day after day the series of facts and incidents in some of the most celebrated historians.

While I was thus employed I reflected with exultation upon the degree in which man is independent of the smiles and frowns of fortune. I was beyond her reach, for I could fall no lower. To an ordinary eye I might seem destitute and miserable, but in reality I wanted for nothing. My fare was coarse; but I was in health. My dungeon was noisome; but I felt no inconvenience. I was shut up from the usual means of exercise and air; but I found the method of exercising myself even to perspiration in my dungeon. I had no means of withdrawing my person from a disgusting society in the most chearful and valuable part of the day; but I soon brought to perfection the art of withdrawing my thoughts, and saw and heard the people about me for just as short a time and as seldom as I pleased.

Such is man in himself considered; so simple his nature; so few his wants. How different from the man of artificial society! Palaces are built for his reception, a thousand vehicles provided for his exercise, provinces are ransacked for the gratification of his appetite, and the whole world traversed to supply him with apparel and furniture. Thus vast is his expenditure, and the purchase slavery. He is dependent on a thousand accidents for tranquillity and health, and his body and soul are at the devotion of whoever will satisfy his imperious cravings.

In addition to the disadvantages of my present situation, I was reserved for an ignominious death. What then? Every man must die. No man
knows

knows how soon. It surely is not worse to encounter the king of terrors in health and with every advantage for the collection of fortitude, than to encounter him already half subdued by sickness, and suffering. I was resolved at least fully to possess the days I had to live, and this is peculiarly in the power of the man who preserves his health to the last moment of his existence. Why should I suffer my mind to be invaded by unavailing regrets? Every sentiment of vanity, or rather of independence and justice within me, instigated me to say to my persecutor, You may cut off my existence, but you cannot disturb my serenity.

C H A P. IV.

IN the midst of these reflections another thought, which had not before struck me, occurred to my mind. I exult, said I, and reasonably, over the impotence of my persecutor. Is not that impotence greater than I have yet imagined? I say, he may cut off my existence, but cannot disturb my serenity. It is true: my mind, the clearness of my spirit, the firmness of my temper, are beyond his reach; is not my life equally so, if I please? What are the material obstacles that man never subdued? What is the undertaking so arduous that by some has not been accomplished? And, if by others, why not by me? Had they stronger motives than I? Was existence more variously endeared to them, or had they more numerous methods by which to animate and adorn it? Many of those who have exerted most perseverance and intrepidity were obviously my inferiors in that respect. Why should not I be as daring as they? Adamant and steel have a ductility like water to a mind sufficiently bold and contemplative. The mind is its own place; and is endowed with powers that might enable it to laugh at the tyrant's vigilance. I passed and repassed these ideas in my mind; and, heated with the contemplation, I said, No, I will not die!

My reading in early youth had been extremely miscellaneous. I had read of housebreakers to whom locks and bolts were a jest, and who, vain of their art, exhibited the experiment of entering
a house

a house the most strongly barricaded, with as little noise and almost as little trouble as other men would lift up a latch. This circumstance had caught my attention. There is nothing so interesting to the juvenile mind as the wonderful; there is no power that it so eagerly covets as that of astonishing spectators by its miraculous exertions. Mind appeared to my untutored reflections vague, airy and unfettered, the susceptible perceiver of reasons, but never intended by nature to be the slave of force. Why should it be in the power of man to overtake and hold me by force? Why, when I choose to withdraw myself, should I not be capable of eluding the most vigilant search? These limbs and this trunk are a cumbrous and unfortunate load for the power of thinking to drag along with it; but why should not the power of thinking be able to lighten the load till it shall be no longer felt?—These early modes of reflection were by no means indifferent to my present enquiries.

Our next-door neighbour at my father's house had been a carpenter. Fresh from the sort of reading, I have mentioned, I was eager to examine his tools, their powers and their uses. This carpenter was a man of a strong and vigorous mind; and, his faculties having been chiefly confined to the range of his profession, he was fertile in experiments and ingenious in reasoning upon these particular topics. I therefore obtained from him considerable satisfaction; and, my mind being set in action, I sometimes even improved upon the hints he furnished. His conversation was particularly agreeable to me; I at first worked with him sometimes for my amusement, and afterwards occasionally for a short time as his journeyman. I was constitutionally vigorous, my bones well knit, and my limbs finewy and powerful; and by the experience

rience thus attained I added to the abstract possession of power the skill of applying it, when I pleased, in such a manner as that no part should be inefficient.

It is a strange, but no uncommon feature in the human mind, that the very resource of which we stand in greatest need in a critical situation, though already accumulated it may be by preceding industry, fails to present itself at the time when it should be called into action. Thus my mind had passed through two very different stages since my imprisonment, before this means of liberation suggested itself. My faculties were overwhelmed in the first instance, and raised to a pitch of enthusiasm in the second, while in both I took it for granted in a manner that I must passively submit to the good pleasure of my persecutors.

During the period in which my mind had been thus undecided, the assizes, which were held twice a year in the town in which I was a prisoner, came on. Upon this occasion my case was not brought forward, but was suffered to stand over six months longer. It would have been just the same, if I had had as strong reason to expect acquittal, as I had conviction. If I had been apprehended upon the most frivolous reasons upon which any justice of the peace ever thought proper to commit a naked beggar for trial, I must still have waited about two hundred and seventeen days, before my innocence could be cleared. So imperfect are the effects of the boasted laws of a country whose legislators hold their assembly from four to six months in every year! I never certainly discovered whether this delay were owing to any interference on the part of my prosecutor, or whether it fell out in the regular administration of justice, which is too solemn and dignified to accommodate
itself

itself to the rights or benefit of an insignificant individual.

The term of my imprisonment was thus unaccountably prolonged. But this was not the only incident that occurred to me during my confinement for which I could find no satisfactory solution. It was nearly at the same time, that is, when I had been little more than a month in durance, that the keeper began to alter his behaviour to me. He sent for me one morning into the part of the building which was appropriated for his own use, and after some hesitation told me he was sorry my accommodations had been so indifferent, and asked whether I should like to have a chamber in his family? I was struck with the unexpectedness of this question, and desired to know whether any body had employed him to ask it. No, he replied; but, now the assizes were over, he had fewer felons on his hands, and more time to look about him. He believed I was a good kind of a young man; and he had taken a sort of a liking to me. I fixed my eye upon his countenance as he said this. I could discover none of the usual symptoms of kindness; he appeared to me to be acting a part, unnatural and that sat with awkwardness upon him. He went on however to offer me the liberty of eating at his table, which, if I chose it, he said would make no difference to him, and he should not think of charging me any thing for it. He had always indeed as much upon his hands as one person could see to; but his wife and his daughter Peggy would be woundily pleased to hear a person of learning talk, as he understood I was; and perhaps I might not feel myself disagreeable in their company.

I reflected on this proposal, and had little doubt, notwithstanding what the keeper had affirmed to
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the contrary, that it did not proceed from any spontaneous humanity in him, but that he had, to speak the language of persons of his cast, good reasons for what he did. I busied myself in conjectures as to who could be the author of this sort of indulgence and attention. The two most likely persons were Mr. Falkland and Mr. Forester. The latter I knew to be a man austere and inexorable towards those whom he deemed vicious. He piqued himself upon being insensible to those softer emotions, which he believed to answer no other purpose than to seduce us from our duty. Mr. Falkland on the contrary was a man of the acutest sensibility; hence arose his pleasures and his pains, his virtues and his vices. Though he were the bitterest enemy to whom I could possibly be exposed, and though no sentiments of humanity could divert or controul the bent of his mind, I yet persuaded myself that he was more likely than his kinsman to visit in idea the scene of my dungeon, and to feel impelled to alleviate my sufferings.

This conjecture was by no means calculated to serve as balm to my mind. My thoughts were unavoidably full of irritation against my persecutor. How could I think kindly of a man, in competition with the gratification of whose ruling passion my good name or my life was deemed as of no consideration? I saw him crushing the one and bringing the other into jeopardy, with a quietness and composure on his part that I could not recollect without horror. I knew not what were his plans respecting me. I knew not whether he troubled himself so much as to form a barren wish for the preservation of one, whose future prospects he had so iniquitously tarnished. I had hitherto been silent as to my principal topic of recrimination. But I was by no means certain that I should consent

sent to go out of the world in silence, the victim of this man's obduracy and art. In every view I felt my heart ulcerated with a sense of his injustice; and my very soul spurned these pitiful indulgences, at a time that he was grinding me into dust with the inexorableness of his vengeance.

I was influenced by these sentiments in my reply to the jailor; and I found a secret pleasure in pronouncing them in all their bitterness. I viewed him with a sarcastic smile, and said, I was glad to find him of a sudden become so humane: I was not however without some penetration as to the humanity of a jailor, and could guess at the circumstances by which it was produced. But he might tell his employer that his cares were fruitless; I would accept no favours from a man that held a halter about my neck, and had courage enough to endure the worst both in time to come and now.—The jailor looked at me with astonishment, and, turning upon his heel, exclaimed, Well done, my cock! You have not had your learning for nothing I see. You are set upon not dying dunghill. But that is to come, lad: you had better by half keep your courage till you shall find it wanted.

The assizes, which passed over without influence to me, produced a great revolution among my fellow prisoners. I lived long enough in the jail to witness a general mutation of its inhabitants. One of the housebreakers and the coiner were hanged. Two more were cast for transportation, and the rest acquitted. The transports remained with us; and, though the prison was thus lightened of nine of its inhabitants, I left within three as many persons on the felons' side as I had found there on my first arrival.

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The soldier, whose story I have already recorded, died, on the evening of the very day on which the judges arrived, of a disease the consequence of his confinement. Such was the justice that resulted from the laws of his country, to an individual who would have been the ornament of any age, one who of all the men I ever knew was inexpressibly the kindest, of the most feeling heart, of the most engaging and unaffected manners, and the most unblemished life. The name of this man was Brightwel. Were it possible for my pen to consecrate him to never dying fame, I could undertake no task more grateful to my heart. His judgment was penetrating and manly, totally unmixed with imbecility and confusion, while at the same time there was such an uncontending frankness in his countenance, that a superficial observer would have supposed he must have been the prey of the first plausible knavery that was practised against him. Great reason have I to remember him with affection! He was the most ardent, and I had almost said the last of my friends. Nor did I remain in this respect in his debt. There was indeed a great congeniality, if I may presume to say so, in our characters, except that I cannot pretend to rival the magnitude of his genius, or to compare with, what the world has scarcely surpassed, the correctness and untainted purity of his conduct. He heard my story, as far as I thought proper to disclose it, with interest, he examined it with sincere impartiality, and, if at first any doubt remained upon his mind, a frequent observation of me in my most unguarded moments taught him in no long time to place an unreserved confidence in my innocence.

He talked of the injustice of which we were mutually victims without bitterness, and predicted that

that the time would come when the possibility of such intolerable oppression would be extirpated. But this, he said, was a happiness reserved for posterity; it was too late for us to reap the benefit of it. It was some consolation to him, that he could not tell the period in his past life, which the best judgment of which he was capable would teach him to spend better. He could say, with as much reason as most men, he had discharged his duty. But he foresaw that he should not survive his present calamity. This was his prediction, while yet in his health. He might be said in a certain sense to have a broken heart. But, if that phrase were in any way applicable to him, sure never was despair more calm, more full of resignation and serenity.

At no time in the whole course of my adventures was I exposed to a shock more severe than I received from this man's death. The circumstances of his fate presented themselves to my mind in their full complication of iniquity. From him and the execrations with which I loaded the government that could be the instrument of his tragedy, I turned to myself. I beheld the catastrophe of Brightwel with envy. A thousand times I longed that my corse had laid in death, instead of his. I was only reserved, as I persuaded myself, for unutterable woe. In a few days he would have been acquitted, his liberty, his reputation restored; mankind perhaps, struck with the injustice he had suffered, would have shown themselves eager to balance his misfortunes and obliterate his disgrace. But this man died; and I remained alive! I, who, though not less wrongfully treated than he, had no hope of reparation, must be marked as long I lived for a villain, and in my death probably held up to the scorn and detestation of my species!

Such

Such were some of the immediate reflections which the fate of this unfortunate martyr produced in my mind. Yet my intercourse with Brightwel was not in the review without its portion of comfort. I said, This man has seen through the veil of calumny that overshades me; he has understood, and has loved me. Why should I despair? May I not meet hereafter with men ingenuous like him, who shall do me justice and sympathise with my calamity? With that consolation I will be satisfied. I will rest in the arms of friendship, and forget the malignity of the world. Henceforth I will be contented with tranquil obscurity, with the cultivation of sentiment and wisdom, and the exercise of benevolence within a narrow circle. It was thus that my mind became excited to the project I was about to undertake.

I had no sooner meditated the idea of an escape, than I determined upon the following method of facilitating the preparations for it. I undertook to ingratiate myself with my keeper. In the world I have generally found such persons as had been acquainted with the outline of my story, regarding me with a sort of loathing and abhorrence, which made them avoid me with as much care as if I had been spotted with the plague. The idea of my having first robbed my master, and then endeavoured to clear myself by charging him with subornation against me, placed me in a class distinct from and infinitely more guilty than that of common felons. But this man was too good a master of his profession to entertain aversion against a fellow creature upon such a score. He considered the persons committed to his custody merely as so many human bodies for whom he was responsible that they should be forthcoming in time and place; and the difference of innocence and guilt he looked down

down upon as an affair beneath his attention. I had not therefore the prejudices to encounter in recommending myself to him, that I have found so peculiarly obstinate in many other cases. Add to which, the same motive, whatever it was, that had made him so profuse in his offers a little before, had probably its influence on the present occasion.

I informed him of my skill in the profession of a joiner, and offered to make him half a dozen handsome chairs, if he would facilitate my obtaining the tools necessary for carrying on my profession in my present confinement; for, without his consent previously obtained, it would have been in vain for me to expect that I could quietly exert an industry of this kind, even if my existence had depended upon it. He looked at me first as asking himself what he was to understand by this novel proposal, and then, most graciously relaxing, said, he was glad I was come off a little of my high notions and my buckram, and he would see what he could do. Two days after he signified his compliance. He said that, as to the matter of the present I had offered him, he thought nothing of that, I might do as I pleased in it; but I might depend upon every civility from him that he could show with safety to himself, if so be as, when he was civil, I did not offer a second time to snap and take him up short.

Having thus gained my preliminary, I gradually accumulated tools of various sorts, gimlets, piercers, chissels, *et cetera*. I immediately set myself to work. The nights were long, and the sordid eagerness of my keeper notwithstanding his ostentatious generosity was great; I therefore petitioned and was indulged with a bit of candle that I might amuse myself for an hour or two with
my

my work after I was locked up in my dungeon. I did not however by any means apply constantly to the work I had undertaken, and my jailor betrayed various tokens of impatience. Perhaps he was afraid I should not have finished it before I was hanged. I however insisted upon working at my leisure as I pleased, and this he did not venture expressly to dispute. In addition to the advantages thus obtained, I procured secretly from Miss Peggy, who now and then came into the jail to make her observations of the prisoners, and who seemed to have conceived some partiality for my person, the implement of an iron crow.

In these proceedings it is easy to trace the vice and duplicity that must be expected to grow out of injustice. I know not whether my readers will pardon the sinister advantage I extracted from the mysterious concessions of my keeper. But I must acknowledge my weakness in that respect; I am writing my adventures and not my apology; and I was not prepared to maintain the unvaried sincerity of my manners, at the expence of a speedy close to be put upon my existence.

My plan was now digested. I believed that by means of the crow I could easily and without much noise force the door of my dungeon from its hinges, or, if not, that I could, in case of necessity, cut away the lock. This door led into a narrow passage, bounded on one side by the range of dungeons, and on the other by the jailor's and turnkey's apartments, through which was the usual entrance from the street. This outlet I dared not attempt for fear of disturbing the persons close to whose very door I should in that case have found it necessary to pass. I determined therefore upon another door at the farther end of the passage, which was barricaded, and which led to a sort of

a garden in the occupation of the keeper. This garden I had never entered, but I had had an opportunity of observing it from the window of the felons' day room, which looked that way, the room itself being immediately over the range of dungeons. I perceived that it was bounded by a wall of considerable height, which I was told by my fellow prisoners was the extremity of the jail on that side, and beyond which was a back-lane of some length that terminated upon the skirts of the town. Upon an accurate observation and much reflection upon the subject I found that I should be able, if once I got into the garden, with my gimblets and piercers inserted at proper distances to make a sort of ladder, by means of which I could get clear over the wall, and once more take possession of the sweets of liberty. I preferred this wall to that which immediately skirted my dungeon, on the other side of which was a populous street.

I suffered about two days to elapse from the period at which I had thoroughly digested my project, and then in the very middle of the night began to set about its execution. The first door was attended with considerable difficulty, but at length this obstacle was happily removed. The second door was fastened on the inside. I was therefore able with perfect ease to push back the bolts. But the lock, which of course was depended upon for the principal security, and was therefore strong, was double-shot, and the key taken away. I endeavoured with my chissel to force back the bolt of the lock, but to no purpose. I then unscrewed the box of the lock; and, that being taken away, the door was no longer opposed to my wishes.

Thus far I had proceeded with the happiest success, but close on the other side of the door there was a kennel with a large mastiff dog, of which I had

had not the smallest previous knowledge. Though I stepped along in the most careful manner, this animal was disturbed and began to bark. I was extremely disconcerted, but immediately applied myself to soothe the animal, in which I presently succeeded. I then returned along the passage to listen whether any body had been disturbed by the noise of the dog; resolved, if that were the case, that I would return to my dungeon, and endeavour to replace every thing in its former state. But the whole appeared perfectly quiet, and I was encouraged to proceed in my operation.

I now got to the wall, and had nearly gained half the ascent, when I heard a voice at the garden door, crying, Holloa! who is there? who opened the door? The man received no answer, and the night was too dark for him to distinguish objects at any distance. He therefore returned, as I judged, into the house for a light. Meantime the dog, understanding the key in which these interrogations were uttered, began barking again more violently than ever. I had now no possibility of retreat, and I was not without hopes that I might yet accomplish my object, and clear the wall. Meanwhile a second man came out, while the other was getting his lanthorn, and, by that time, I had got to the top of the wall, was able to perceive me. He immediately set up a shout, and threw a large stone which grazed me in its flight. Alarmed at my situation, I was obliged to descend on the other side without taking the necessary precautions, and in my fall nearly dislocated my ankle.

There was a door in the wall, of which I was not previously apprised; and, this being opened, the two men with the lanthorn were on the other side in an instant. They had then nothing to do but to run along the lane to the place from which I

had descended. I endeavoured to rise after my fall, but the pain was so intense that I was scarcely able to stand, and, after having limped a few paces, I twisted my foot under me, and fell down again. I had now no remedy, and quietly suffered myself to be retaken.

C H A P. V.

I WAS conducted to the keeper's room for that night, and the two men sat up with me. I was accosted with many interrogatories, to which I gave little answer, but complained of the hurt in my leg. To this I could obtain no reply except, Curse you, my lad! if that be all, we will give you some ointment for that; we will anoint it with a little cold iron. They were indeed excessively sulky with me, for having broken their night's rest and given them all this trouble. In the morning they were as good as their word, fixing a pair of fetters upon both my legs, regardless of the ankle which was now swelled to a considerable size, and then fastening me with a padlock to a staple in the floor of my dungeon. I expostulated with warmth upon this treatment, told them that I was a man upon whom the law had as yet passed no censure, and who therefore in the eye of the law was innocent. But they bid me keep such fudge as that for people who knew no better; that they knew what they did, and would answer it to any court in England.

The pain of the fetter was intolerable. I endeavoured in various ways to relieve it, and even privily to free my leg; but the more it was swelled, the more was this rendered impossible. I then resolved to bear it with patience; still the longer it continued, the worse it grew. After two days and two nights I entreated the turnkey to go and ask the surgeon who usually attended the prison

to

to look at it, for, if it continued longer as it was, I was convinced it would mortify. But he glared furily at me, and said, Damn my blood ! I should like to see that day. To die of a mortification is too good an end for such a rascal ! At the time that he thus addressed me, the whole mass of my blood was already fevered by the anguish I had undergone, my patience was wholly exhausted, and I was silly enough to be irritated beyond bearing by his impertinence and vulgarity. Look you, Mr. turnkey, said I, there is one thing that such fellows as you are set over us for, and another thing that you are not. You are to take care we do not escape, but it is no part of your office to call us names and abuse us. If I were not chained down to my seat, you dare as well eat your fingers as use such language ; and, take my word for it, you shall yet live to repent of your insolence.

While I thus spoke, the man stared at me with astonishment. He was so little accustomed to such retorts that at first he could scarcely believe his ears ; and such was the firmness of my manner that he seemed to forget for a moment that I was not at large. But, as soon as he had time to recollect himself, he did not deign even to be angry. His face relaxed into a smile of contempt, he snapped his fingers at me, and, turning upon his heel, exclaimed, Well said, my cock, Crow away ! Have a care you do not burst ! and, as he shut the door upon me, mimicked the voice of the animal he mentioned.

This rejoinder brought me to myself in a moment, and showed me the impotence of the resentment I was expressing. But, though he thus put an end to the violence of my speech, the torture of my body continued as great as ever. I was determined to change my mode of attack. The same turnkey returned in a few minutes ; and, as he approached

proached me to put down some food he had brought I slipped a shilling into his hand, saying at the same time, My good fellow, for God's sake, go to the surgeon: I am sure you do not wish me to perish for want of assistance. The fellow put the shilling in his pocket, looked hard at me, and then with one nod of his head, and without uttering a single word, went away. The surgeon presently after made his appearance; and, finding the part in a high state of inflammation, ordered certain applications, and gave peremptory directions that the fetter should not be replaced upon that leg, till a cure had been effected. It was a full month before the leg was perfectly healed, and made equally strong and flexible with the other.

The condition in which I was now placed was totally different from that which had preceded this attempt. I was chained all day in my dungeon, except that the door was regularly opened for a few hours, at which time some of the prisoners occasionally came and spoke to me, and particularly one, who, though he could ill replace my beloved Brightwel, was innocent, guileless and benevolent. This was no other than the individual whom Mr. Falkland had some months before dismissed upon an accusation of murder. My manual labours were now at an end; my dungeon was searched every night, and every kind of tool carefully kept from me. The straw which had been hitherto allowed me was removed, under pretence that it was adapted for concealment; and the only conveniences with which I was indulged were a chair and a blanket.

A prospect of some alleviation in no long time opened upon me; but this my usual ill fortune rendered abortive. The keeper once more made his appearance, and with his former unconstitutional and ambiguous humanity. He pretended to
be

be surprised at my want of every accommodation. He reprehended in strong terms my attempt to escape, and observed that there must be an end of civility from people in his situation, if gentlemen after all would not know when they were well. It was necessary in cases the like of this to let the law take its course, and it would be ridiculous in me to complain, if after a regular trial things should go hard with me. He was desirous of being in every respect my friend, if I would let him— In the midst of this circumlocution and preamble, he was called away from me for something relating to the business of his office. In the mean time I ruminated upon his overtures; and, detesting as I did the source from which I conceived them to flow, I could not help reflecting how far it would be possible to extract from them the means of escape. But my meditations in this case were vain. The keeper returned no more during the remainder of that day, and on the next an incident occurred which put an end to all expectations from his kindness.

An active mind, which has once been forced into any particular train, can scarcely be persuaded to desert it as hopeless. I had studied my chains during the extreme anguish that I endured from the pressure of the fetter upon the ankle which had been sprained; and, though from the swelling and acute sensibility of the part I had found all attempts at relief in that instance impracticable, I obtained from the closeness of my investigation another and apparently superior advantage. During the night my dungeon was in a state of complete darkness; but, when the door was open, the case was somewhat different. The passage indeed into which it opened was so narrow, and the opposite dead wall so near, that it was but a glim-

a glimmering and melancholy light that entered my apartment, even at full noon, and when the door was at its widest extent. But my eyes, after a practice of two or three weeks, accommodated themselves to this circumstance, and I learned to distinguish the minutest objects. One day, as I was alternately meditating and examining the objects around me, I chanced to observe a nail trodden into the mud floor at no great distance from me. I immediately conceived the desire of possessing myself of this implement; but, for fear of surprise, people passing perpetually to and fro, I contented myself for the present with remarking its situation so accurately, that I might easily find it again in the dark. Accordingly, as soon as my door was shut, I seized upon this new treasure, and, having contrived to fashion it to my purpose, found that I could unlock with it the padlock that fastened me to the staple in the floor. This I regarded as no inconsiderable advantage, separately from the use I might derive from it in relation to my principal object. My chain permitted me to move only about eighteen inches to the right or left; and, having borne this confinement for several weeks, my very heart leaped at the pitiful consolation of being able to range without constraint, the miserable coop in which I was immured. This incident had occurred several days previous to the last visit of my keeper.

From this time it had been my constant practice to liberate myself every night, and not to replace things in their former situation, till I awoke in the morning, and expected shortly to perceive the entrance of the turnkey. Security breeds negligence. It was on the morning succeeding my conference with the jailor that, whether I overslept myself, or the turnkey went his round earlier than usual, I

was roused from my sleep by the noise he made in opening the cell next to my own; and, though I exerted the utmost diligence, yet having to grope for my materials in the dark, I was unable to fasten the chain to the staple, before he entered as usual with his lanthorn. He was extremely surprised to find me thus disengaged, and immediately summoned the principal keeper. I was questioned respecting my method of proceeding; and, as I believed concealment could lead to nothing but a feverer search and a more accurate watch, I readily acquainted them with the exact truth. The illustrious personage whose function it was to controul the inhabitants of these walls, was by this last instance completely exasperated against me. Artifice and fair speaking were at an end. His eyes sparkling with fury, he exclaimed, that he was now convinced of the folly of showing kindness to rascals, the scum of the earth, such as I was; and, damn him, if any body should catch him at that again towards any one. I had cured him effectually! He was astonished that the laws had not provided some terrible retaliation for thieves that attempted to deceive their jailors. Hanging was a thousand times too good for me!

Having vented his indignation, he proceeded to give such orders as the united instigations of anger and alarm suggested to his mind. My apartment was changed. I was conducted to a room called the strong room, the door of which opened into the middle cell of the range of dungeons. It was under-ground as they were, and had over it the day room for felons already described. It was spacious and dreary. The door had not been opened for years; the air was putrid; and the walls hung round with damps and mildew. The fetters, the padlock, and the staple were employed

as in the former case, in addition to which they put on me a pair of hand-cuffs. For my first provision the keeper sent me nothing but a bit of bread, mouldy and black, and some dirty and stinking water. I know not indeed whether this is to be regarded as gratuitous tyranny on the part of the jailor; the law having providently directed in certain cases, that the water to be administered to the prisoners, shall be taken from "the next sink or puddle nearest to the jail." * It was farther ordered that one of the turnkeys should sleep in the cell that formed a sort of antichamber to my apartment. Though every convenience was provided, to render this chamber fit for the reception of a personage, of a dignity so superior to the felon he was appointed to guard, he expressed much dissatisfaction at the mandate: but there was no alternative.

The situation to which I was thus removed was apparently the most undesirable that could be imagined; but I was not discouraged. I had for some time learned not to judge by appearances. The apartment was dank and unwholesome; but I had acquired the secret of counteracting these influences. My door was kept continually shut, and the other prisoners were debarred access to me. But, if the intercourse of our fellow men has its pleasures, solitude on the other hand is not without its advantages. In solitude we can pursue our own thoughts undisturbed; and I was able to call up at will the most pleasing avocations. Beside which, to one who meditated such designs as now filled my mind, solitude had peculiar recommendations. I was scarcely left to myself before I tried an experiment the idea of which I conceived while

* State Trials, Vol. I. anno 1615.

while they were fixing my hand-cuffs; and, with my teeth only, disengaged myself from this restraint. The hours at which I was visited by the keepers were regular, and I took care to be provided for them. Add to which, I had a narrow grated window near the cieling, about nine inches in perpendicular, and a foot and a half in width, which, though small, admitted a much stronger light, than that to which I had been accustomed for several weeks. Thus circumstanced, I scarcely ever found myself in total darkness, and was better provided against surprises, than I had been in my preceding situation. Such were the sentiments which this change of abode immediately suggested.

I had been a very little time removed, when I received an unexpected visit from Thomas, Mr. Falkland's valet, whom I have already more than once mentioned in the course of my narrative. A servant of Mr. Forester happened to come to the town where I was imprisoned, a few weeks before, while I was confined with the hurt in my ankle, and had called in to see me. The account he gave of what he observed had been the source of many an uneasy sensation to Thomas. The former visit was a matter of mere curiosity, but Thomas was of the better order of servants. He was considerably struck at the sight of me. Though my mind was now serene, and my health sufficiently good, yet the floridness of my complexion was gone, and there was a rudeness in my physiognomy, the consequence of hardship and fortitude, extremely unlike the sleekness of my better days. Thomas looked alternately in my face, at my hands and my feet; and then fetched a deep sigh. After a pause:

Lord

Lord bless us! said he, in a voice in which commiseration was sufficiently perceptible, is this you?

Why not, Thomas? You knew I was sent to prison, did not you?

Prison! and must people in prison be shackled and bound of that fashion?—And where do you lay of nights?

Here.

Here! Why there is no bed!

No, Thomas, I am not allowed a bed. I had straw formerly, but that is taken away.

And do they take off them there things of nights?

No; I am expected to sleep just as you see.

Sleep! Why I thought this was a Christian country; but this usage is too bad for a dog.

You must not say so, Thomas. It is what the wisdom of government has thought fit to provide.

Zounds, how I have been choused! They told me what a fine thing it was to be an Englishman, and about liberty and property, and all that there; and I find it is all a sham. Lord, what fools we be! Things are done under our very noses, and we know nothing of the matter; and a parcel of fellows with grave faces swear to us that such things never happen but in France, and other countries the like of that. Why, you han't been tried, ha' you?

No.

And what signifies being tried, when they do worse than hang a man, and all beforehand? Well, master Williams, you have been very wicked to be sure, and I thought it would have done me good to see you hanged. But, I do not know how it is, one's heart melts, and pity comes over one, if we take time to cool. I know that ought not to be; but, damn it, when I talked of your being hanged, I did.

I did not think of your suffering all this into the bargain.

Soon after this conversation Thomas left me. The idea of the long connexion of our families rushed upon his memory, and he felt more for my sufferings at the moment than I did for myself. In the afternoon I was surprised to see him again. He said, that he could not get the thought of me out of his mind, and therefore he hoped I would not be displeased at his coming once more to take leave of me. I could perceive that he had something upon his mind, which he did not know how to discharge. One of the turnkeys had each time come into the room with him, and continued as long as he staid. Upon some avocation however, a noise I believe in the passage, the turnkey went as far as the door to satisfy his curiosity; and Thomas, watching the opportunity, slipped into my hand a chissel, a file, and a saw, exclaiming at the same time with a sorrowful tone, I know I am doing wrong; but, if they hang me too, I cannot help it: I cannot do no other. For Christ's sake, get out of this place; I cannot bear the thoughts of it!—I received the implements with great joy, and thrust them into my bosom; and, as soon as he was gone, concealed them in the rushes of my chair. Meanwhile he had accomplished the object for which he came, and presently after bade me farewell.

The next day the keepers, I know not for what reason, were more than usually industrious in their search, saying, though without assigning any ground for their suspicion, that they were sure I had some tool in my possession that I ought not; but the depository I had chosen escaped them.

I waited from this time the greater part of a week that I might have the benefit of a bright moon

moon light. It was necessary that I should work in the night; it was necessary that my operations should be performed between the last visit of the keepers at night and their first in the morning, that is, between nine in the evening and seven. In my dungeon, as I have already said, I passed fourteen or sixteen hours of the four and twenty undisturbed; but, since I had acquired a character for mechanical ingenuity, a particular exception with respect to me was made from the general rules of the prison.

It was ten o'clock when I entered on my undertaking. The room in which I was confined was secured with a double door. This was totally superfluous for the purpose of my detention, since there was a centinel planted on the outside. But it was very fortunate for my plan, because these doors prevented the easy communication of sound, and afforded me tolerable satisfaction that with a little care in my mode of proceeding I might be secure against the danger of being overheard. I first took off my hand-cuffs. I then filed through my fetters; and next performed the same service to three of the iron bars that secured my window, to which I climbed partly by the assistance of my chair and partly by means of certain irregularities in the wall. All this was the work of more than two hours. When the bars were filed through, I easily forced them a little from the perpendicular, and then drew them one by one out of the wall, into which they were sunk about three inches, perfectly strait, and without any precaution to prevent their being removed. But the space thus obtained was by no means wide enough to admit the passing of my body. I therefore applied myself partly with my chissel, and partly with one of the iron bars, to the loosening the brick-work; and, when I had

I had thus disengaged four or five bricks, I got down and piled them upon the floor. This operation I repeated three or four times. The space was now sufficient for my purpose, and having crept through the opening, I stepped upon a sort of shed on the outside.

I was now in a kind of rude area between two dead walls, that south of the felons day room the windows of which were at the east end, and the wall of the prison. But I had not, as formerly, any instruments to assist me in scaling the wall which was of a considerable height. There was of consequence no resource for me but that of effecting a practicable breach in the lower part of the wall, which was of no contemptible strength, being of stone on the outside, with a facing of brick within. The rooms for the debtors were at right angles with the building from which I had just escaped; and, as the night was extremely bright, I was in momentary danger, particularly in case of the least noise, of being discovered by them, several of their windows commanding the area. Thus circumstanced, I determined to make the shed answer the purpose of concealment. It was locked; but, with the broken link of my fetters, which I had had the precaution to bring with me, I found no great difficulty in opening the lock. I had now got a sufficient means of hiding my person while I proceeded in my work, attended with no other disadvantage, than that of being obliged to leave the door through which I had thus broken, a little open for the sake of light. After some time I had removed a considerable part of the brick work of the outer wall; but, when I came to the stone, I found the undertaking infinitely more difficult. The mortar which bound together the building, was by length of time nearly petrified,

fied, and appeared to my first efforts one solid rock of the hardest adamant. I had now been six hours incessantly engaged in incredible labour; my chissel broke in the first attempt upon this new obstacle, and between fatigue already endured, and the seemingly invincible difficulty before me, I concluded that I must remain where I was, and that all I had hitherto effected would prove useless. At the same time the moon, whose light had till now been of the greatest use to me, set, and I was left in total darkness.

After a respite of ten minutes however, I returned to the attack with new vigour. I could not be less than two hours before the first stone was loosened from the edifice. In one hour more the space was sufficient to admit of my escape. The pile of bricks I had left in the strong room was considerable. But it was a mole hill compared with the ruins I had forced from the outer wall. I am fully assured that the work I had thus performed would have been to a common labourer with every advantage of tools the business of two or three days.

But my difficulties, instead of being ended, seemed to be only begun. The day broke before I had completed the opening, and in ten minutes more the keepers would probably enter my apartment, and perceive the devastation I had left. The lane, which connected the side of the prison through which I had escaped with the adjacent country, was formed chiefly by two dead walls, with here and there a stable, a few warehouses and some mean habitations tenanted by the lower order of people. My best security lay in clearing the town as soon as possible, and depending upon the open country for protection. My arms were intolerably swelled and bruised with my labour, and my

my strength seemed wholly exhausted with fatigue. Speed I was nearly unable to exert for any continuance; and, if I could, with the enemy so close at my heels, speed would too probably have been useless. It appeared as if I were now in almost the same situation, as that in which I had been placed five or six weeks before, in which after having completed my escape I was obliged to yield myself up without resistance to my pursuers. I was not however disabled as then; I was capable of exertion to what precise extent I could not ascertain; and I was well aware that every instance in which I should fail of my purpose, would contribute to enhance the difficulty of any future attempt. Such were the considerations that presented themselves in relation to my escape; and, even if that were effected, I had to reckon among my difficulties that, at the time I quitted my prison, I was destitute of every resource, and had not a shilling remaining in the world.

CHAP. VI.

I PASSED along the lane I had described without perceiving or being observed by a human being. The doors were shut, the window-shutters closed, and all was still as night. I reached the extremity of the lane unmolested. My pursuers, if they immediately followed, would know that the likelihood was small of my having in the interval found shelter in this place; and would proceed without hesitation, as I on my part was obliged to do, from the end nearest to the prison to its farthest termination.

The face of the country, in the spot to which I had thus opened myself a passage, was rude and uncultivated. It was overgrown with brushwood and furze; the soil was for the most part of a loose sand; and the surface extremely irregular. I climbed a small eminence, and could perceive not very remote in the distance a few cottages thinly scattered. This prospect did not altogether please me; I conceived that my safety would for the present be extremely benefited by keeping myself from the view of any human being.

I therefore came down again into the valley, and upon a careful examination perceived that it was interspersed with cavities, some deeper than others, but all of them so shallow as neither to be capable of hiding a man, nor of exciting suspicion as places of possible concealment. Meanwhile the day had but just begun to dawn; the morning was lowering and drizzly; and, though the depth of these

these caverns was of course well known to the neighbouring inhabitants, the shadows they cast were so black and impenetrable as might well have produced wider expectations in the mind of a stranger. Poor therefore as was the protection they were able to afford, I thought it right to have recourse to it for the moment as the best the emergency would supply. It was for my life; and, the greater was the jeopardy to which it was exposed, the more dear did that life seem to become to my affections. The recess I chose as most secure was within little more than a hundred yards of the end of the lane and the extreme buildings of the town.

I had not stood up in this manner two minutes, before I heard the sound of feet, and presently saw the ordinary turnkey and another pass by the place of my retreat. They were so close to me that, if I had stretched out my hand, I believe I could have caught hold of their clothes without so much as changing my posture. As no part of the overhanging earth intervened between me and them, I could see them entire, though the deepness of the shade rendered me almost completely invisible. I heard them say to each other, in tones of vehement asperity, Curse the rascal! which way can he be gone? The reply was, Damn him! I wish we had him but safe once again! Never fear! rejoined the first, he cannot have above half a mile the start of us. They were presently out of hearing; for, as to sight, I dared not advance my body so much as an inch to look after them, lest I should be discovered by my pursuers in some other direction. From the very short time that elapsed between my escape and the appearance of these men, I concluded that they had made their way through the same outlet as I had done, it being impossible that they could have had time to come
from

from the gate of the prison and so round a considerable part of the town, as they must otherwise have done.

I was so alarmed at this instance of diligence on the part of the enemy, that for some time I scarcely ventured to proceed an inch from my place of concealment, or almost to change my posture. The morning, which had been bleak and drizzly, was succeeded by a day of heavy and incessant rain: and the gloomy state of the air and surrounding objects, together with the extreme nearness of my prison, and a total want of food, caused me to pass the hours in no very agreeable sensations. This inclemency of the weather however, which generated a feeling of stillness and solitude, encouraged me by degrees to change my retreat, for another of the same nature, but of somewhat greater security. I hovered with little variation about a single spot as long as the sun continued above the horizon.

Towards evening the clouds began to disperse, and the moon shone, as on the preceding night, in full brightness. I had perceived no human creature during the whole day, except in the instance already mentioned. This had perhaps been owing to the nature of the day; at all events I considered it as too hazardous an experiment to venture from my hiding-place in so clear and fine a night. I was therefore obliged to wait for the setting of this luminary, which was not till near five o'clock in the morning. My only relief during this interval was to allow myself to sink to the bottom of my cavern, it being scarcely possible for me to continue any longer on my feet. Here I fell into an interrupted and unrefreshing doze, the consequence of a laborious night and a tedious, melancholy day; though I rather sought to avoid sleep,

sleep, which, co-operating with the coldness of the season, would tend more to injury than advantage.

The period of darkness which I had determined to use for the purpose of removing to a greater distance from my prison was in its whole duration something less than three hours. When I rose from my seat, I was weak with hunger and fatigue, and, which was worse, I seemed between the dampness of the preceding day, and the sharp, clear frost of the night, to have lost the command of my limbs. I stood up and shook myself; I leaned against the side of the hill, impelling in different directions the muscles of the extremities; and at length recovered in some degree the sense of feeling. This operation was attended with an incredible aching pain, and required no common share of resolution to encounter and prosecute it. Having quitted my retreat, I at first advanced with weak and tottering steps; but, as I proceeded, increased my pace. The barren heath which reached to the edge of the town was at least on this side without a path; but the stars shone, and guiding myself by them I determined to steer as far as possible from the hateful scene where I had been so long confined. The line I pursued was of irregular surface, sometimes obliging me to climb a steep ascent, and at others to go down into a dark and impenetrable dell. I was often compelled by the dangerousness of the way to deviate considerably from the direction I wished to pursue. In the mean time I advanced with as much rapidity, as these and similar obstacles would permit me to do. The swiftness of the motion and the thinness of the air restored to me my alacrity. I forgot the inconveniences under which I laboured, and my mind became lively, spirited and enthusiastic.

I had

I had now reached the border of the heath and entered upon what is usually termed the forest. Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that, exhausted as I was with hunger, destitute of all provision for the future, and surrounded with the most alarming dangers, my mind suddenly became glowing, animated and chearful. I thought that by this time the most formidable difficulties of my undertaking were surmounted; and I could not believe that, after having effected so much, I should find any thing invincible in what remained to be done. I recollected the confinement I had undergone and the fate that had impended over me with horror. Never did man feel more vividly than I felt at that moment the sweets of liberty. Never did man more strenuously prefer poverty with independence to the artificial allurements of a life of slavery. I stretched forth my arms with rapture, I clapped my hands one upon the other, and exclaimed, Ah, this is indeed to be a man! These wrists were lately galled with fetters; all my motions, whether I rose up or sat down, were echoed to with the clanking of chains; I was tied down like a wild beast, and could not move but in a circle of a few feet in circumference. Now I can run, fleet as a greyhound; and leap like a young roe upon the mountains. Oh, God! (if God there be, that condescends to record the lonely beatings of an anxious heart) thou only canst tell with what delight a prisoner, just broke forth from his dungeon, hugs the blessings of new-found liberty! Sacred and indescribable moment, when man regains his rights! But lately I held my life in jeopardy, because one man was unprincipled enough to assert what he knew to be false; I was destined to suffer an early and inexorable death from the hands of others, because none of them had penetration
enough

enough to distinguish from falsehood what I uttered with the entire conviction of a full-fraught heart! Strange, that men from age to age should consent to hold their lives at the breath of another, merely that each in his turn may have a power of acting the tyrant according to law! Oh, God! give me poverty! shower upon me all the imaginary hardships of human life! I will receive them all with thankfulness. Turn me a prey to the wild beasts of the desert, so I be never again the victim of man dressed in the gore-dripping robes of authority! Suffer me at least to call life and the pursuits of life my own! Let me hold it at the mercy of elements, of the hunger of beasts or the revenge of barbarians, but not of the cold-blooded prudence of monopolists and kings!—How enviable was the enthusiasm which could thus furnish me with energy, in the midst of hunger, poverty and universal desertion!

I had now walked at least six miles. At first I carefully avoided the habitations that lay in my way, and feared to be seen by any of the persons to whom they belonged, lest it should in any degree furnish a clue to the researches of my pursuers. As I went forward, I conceived it might be proper to relax a part of my precaution. At this time I perceived several persons coming out of a thicket close to me. I immediately considered this circumstance as rather favourable than the contrary. It was necessary for me to avoid entering any of the towns and villages in the vicinity. At the same time it was full time that I should procure for myself some species of refreshment; and it was by no means improbable that these men might be in some way assisting to me in that respect. In my situation it appeared to me indifferent what might be their employment or profession.

feffion. I had little to apprehend from thieves, and I believed that they, as well as honest men, could not fail to have some compassion for a person under my circumstances. I therefore rather threw myself in their way than avoided them.

They were thieves. One of the company cried out, Who goes there? stand! I accosted them. Gentlemen, said I, I am a poor traveller, almost — While I spoke, they came round me, and he that had first hailed me said, Damn me, tip us none of your palaver; we have heard that story of a poor traveller any time these five years. Come, down with your dust! let us see what you have got! Sir, I replied, I have not a shilling in the world, and am more than half-starved beside. Not a shilling! answered my assailant, what, I suppose you are as poor as a thief? But, if you have not money, you have clothes, and those you must resign.

My clothes! rejoined I with indignation; you cannot desire such a thing. Is it not enough that I am pennylefs? I have been all night upon the open heath. It is now the second day that I have not eaten a morsel of bread. Would you strip me naked to the weather in the midst of this depopulated forest? No, no, you are men! The same hatred of oppression that arms you against the insolence of wealth, will teach you to relieve those who are perishing like me. For God's sake, give me food! do not strip me of the benefits I still possess!

While I uttered this apostrophe, the unpremeditated eloquence of sentiment, I could perceive by their gestures, though the day had not yet begun to dawn, that the feelings of one or two of the company appeared to take my part. The man, who had already undertaken to be their spokesman,

perceived the same thing; and, excited either by the brutality of his temper or the love of command, hastened to anticipate the disgrace of a defeat. He brushed suddenly up to me, and by main force pushed me several feet from the place where I stood. The shock I received drove me upon a second of the gang, not one of those who had listened to my expostulation; and he repeated the same brutality. My indignation was strongly excited by this treatment; and, after being thrust backward and forward two or three times in this manner, I broke through my assailants, and turned round to defend myself. The first that advanced within my reach was my original enemy. In the present moment I listened to nothing but the dictates of passion, and I laid him at his length on the earth. I was immediately assailed with sticks and bludgeons on all sides, and presently received a blow that almost deprived me of my senses. The man I had knocked down was now upon his feet again, and aimed a stroke at me with a cutlass as I fell, which took place in a deep wound upon my neck and shoulder. He was going to repeat his blow. The two who had seemed to waver at first in their animosity, afterwards appeared to me to join in the attack, urged either by animal sympathy or the spirit of imitation. One of them however, as I afterwards understood, seized the arm of the man who was going to strike me a second time with his cutlass, and who would otherwise probably have put an end to my existence. I could hear the words, Damn it, enough, enough! that is too bad, Jones! How so? replied a second voice; he will but pine here upon the forest, and die by inches: it is an act of charity in this case to put him out of his pain.—It will be imagined that I was not uninterested in this sort of debate. I made

made an effort to speak; my voice failed me. I stretched out one hand with a gesture of intreaty. You shall not strike, by G—! said one of the voices; why should we be murderers?—The tide of forbearance at length prevailed. They therefore contented themselves with stripping me of my coat and waistcoat, and rolling me into a dry ditch. They then left me, totally regardless of my distressed condition, and the plentiful effusion of blood which streamed from my wound.

C H A P. VII.

IN this woful situation, though extremely weak, I was not deprived of sense. I tore my shirt from my naked body, and with it endeavoured with some success to make a bandage to stanch the flowing of the blood. I then exerted myself to crawl up the side of the ditch. I had scarcely effected the latter, when with equal surprise and joy I perceived a man advancing at no great distance. I called for help as well as I could. The man came towards me with evident signs of compassion, and the figure I exhibited was indeed sufficiently calculated to excite it. I had no hat. My hair was disheveled, and the ends of the locks clotted with blood. My shirt was wrapped about my neck and shoulder, and was plentifully stained with red. My body which was naked to my middle was variegated with streams of blood, nor had my breeches which were of leather by any means escaped.

For God's sake, my poor fellow! said he, with a tone of the greatest imaginable kindness, how came you thus? And, saying this, he lifted me up, and set me on my feet. Can you stand? added he doubtfully. Oh, yes, very well, I replied. Having received this answer, he quitted me, and began to take off his own coat, that he might cover me from the cold. I had however overrated my strength, and was no sooner left to myself, than I reeled, and fell almost at my length upon the ground.

ground. But I broke my fall by stretching out my sound arm, and again raised myself upon my knees. My benefactor now covered me, raised me, and bidding me lean upon him, told me he would presently conduct me to a place where I should be taken care of. Courage is a capricious property; and, though while I had no one to depend upon but myself, I possessed a mine of seemingly inexhaustible fortitude, yet no sooner did I find this unexpected sympathy on the part of another, than my resolution appeared to give way, and I felt myself ready to faint. My charitable conductor perceived this, and he every now and then encouraged me in a manner so chearful, so good humoured and benevolent, equally free from the harshness of rebuke and the weakness of indulgence, that I thought myself under the conduct of an angel rather than a man. I could perceive that his behaviour had in it nothing of boorish rudeness, and that he was thoroughly imbued with the principles of affectionate civility.

We walked about three quarters of a mile, and that not towards the open, but the most uncouth and unfrequented part of the forest. We crossed a place which had once been a moat, but which was now in some parts dry and in others contained a little muddy and stagnated water. Within the inclosure of this moat, and among the still visible foundations of a larger, ancient building, was a cottage, or rather two or three cottages irregularly thrown together, not different from the habitations of the peasantry in general, except that they were constructed for the most part of materials supplied from this ancient ruin.

My conductor knocked at the door, and was answered by a voice from within, which for body and force might have been the voice of a man, but
which

which had a sort of female sharpness and acidity, with the enquiry, Who is there? Satisfaction was no sooner given in this point, than I heard two bolts pushed back and the door unlocked. The apartment opened, and we entered. The interior of the building by no means corresponded with the appearance of my protector, but on the contrary wore a face of discomfort, carelessness and dirt. The only person I saw within was a woman, rather advanced in life, and whose appearance had I know not what of extraordinary and loathsome. Her eyes were red and blood-shot; her hair was pendent in matted and shaggy tresses about her shoulders; her complexion swarthy, and of the consistency of parchment; her form spare, and her whole body, her arms in particular, uncommonly vigorous and muscular. Not the milk of human kindness, but the feverous blood of savage ferocity seemed to flow from her heart; and her whole figure suggested an idea of unmitigable energy and an appetite gorged in malevolence. This infernal Thalestris had no sooner cast her eyes upon us as we entered, than she exclaimed in a discordant and discontented voice, What have we got here? this is not one of our people! My conductor, without answering this apostrophe, bid her push an easy chair which stood in one corner, and set it directly before the fire. This she did with apparent reluctance, muttering, Ah, you are at your old tricks; I wonder what such folks as we have to do with charity! It will be the ruin of us at last, I can see that! Hold your tongue, beldam! said he, with a stern significance of manner, and fetch one of my best shirts, a waistcoat and some dressings. Saying this, he at the same time put into her hand a small bunch of keys. In a word, he treated me with as much kindness as if he had
been

been my father. He examined my wound, washed and dressed it; at the same time that the old woman by his express order prepared for me such nourishment as he thought most suitable to my weak and languid condition.

These operations were no sooner completed, than my benefactor recommended to me to retire to rest, and preparations were making for that purpose, when suddenly a trampling of feet was heard, succeeded by a knock at the door. The old woman opened the door with the same precautions as had been employed upon our arrival, and immediately six or seven persons tumultuously entered the apartment. Their appearance was different, some having the air of mere rustics, and others that of a tarnished sort of gentry. All had a feature of boldness, inquietude and disorder, extremely unlike any thing I had before observed in such a groupe. But my astonishment was still increased, when upon a second glance I perceived something in the general air of several of them, and of one in particular, that persuaded me they were the gang from which I had just escaped, and this one the antagonist by whose animosity I was so near to the having been finally destroyed. I instantly imagined they had entered our hovel with a hostile intention, that my benefactor was upon the point of being robbed, and I probably murdered.

This suspicion however was soon removed. They addressed my conductor with respect under the appellation of captain. They were boisterous and noisy in their remarks and exclamations, but their turbulence was tempered by a certain deference to his opinion and authority. I could observe in the person who had been my active opponent some awkwardness and irresolution as he first perceived me, which he dismissed with a sort of effort,

effort, exclaiming, Who the devil is here? There was something in the tone of this apostrophe that roused the attention of my protector. He looked at the speaker with a fixed and penetrating glance, and then said, Nay, Jones, do you know? Did you ever see the person before? Curse it, Jones! interrupted a third, you are damnably out of luck. They say dead men walk, and you see there is some truth in it. Truce with your impertinence, Barton! replied my protector, this is no proper occasion for a joke. Answer me, Jones, were you the cause of this young man being left naked and wounded this bitter morning upon the forest?

Mayhap I was. What then?

What provocation could induce you to so cruel a treatment?

Provocation enough. He had no money.

What, did you use him thus without so much as being irritated by any resistance on his part?

Yes, he did resist. I only hustled him, and he had the impudence to strike me.

Jones! you are an incorrigible fellow.

Pooh, what signifies what I am? You with your compassion and your fine feelings will bring us all to the gallows.

I have nothing to say to you; I have no hopes of you! Comrades, it is for you to decide upon the conduct of this man as you think proper. You know how repeated his offences have been; you know what pains I have taken to mend him. Our profession is the profession of justice. [It is thus that the prejudices of men universally teach them to colour the most desperate cause, to which they have determined to adhere.] We undertake to counteract the partiality and iniquity of public institutions. We, who are thieves without a licence, are at open war with another set of men, who are thieves

thieves according to law. If any one disapprove our proceedings, at least we have this to say for ourselves, we act not by choice, but only as our wise governors force us to act. If any one disapprove our proceedings, they have this apology in their favour, we risk our lives when we adopt them, and stake our all upon their goodness and cogency. Time will one day decide whether we or our oppressors be the genuine patriots: for the present we are censured, only because they are the stronger party. With such a cause then to bear us out, shall we stain it with cruelty, malice and revenge? For my own part I glory in the name of a thief; and am firmly persuaded there is not a more gallant and honourable profession upon the face of the earth, so long as it is exercised with a generous heart.—A thief is of course a man living among his equals; I do not pretend therefore to assume any authority among you; act as you think proper; but so far as relates to myself, I vote that Jones be expelled from among us as a disgrace to our society.

This proposition seemed to meet the general sense. It was easy to perceive that the opinion of the rest coincided with that of their leader; notwithstanding which a few of them hesitated as to the conduct to be pursued. In the mean time Jones muttered something in a surly and irresolute way about taking care how they provoked him. This insinuation instantly roused the courage of my protector, and his eyes flashed with contempt.

Rascal! said he, do you menace us? Do you think we will be your slaves? No, no, do your worst! Go to the next justice of the peace and impeach us; I can easily believe you are capable of it. Sir, when we entered into this gang, we were not such fools as not to know

that we entered upon a service of danger. One of its dangers consists in the treachery of fellows like you. But we did not enter at first, to flinch now. Did you believe that we would live in hourly fear of you, tremble at your threats, and compromise, whenever you should so please, with your insolence? That would be a blessed life indeed! I would rather see my flesh torn piecemeal from my bones! Go, sir! I defy you! You dare not do it! You dare not sacrifice all these gallant fellows to your rage, and publish yourself to all the world a traitor and a scoundrel! If you do, you will punish yourself, not us! Begone!

The intrepidity of the leader communicated itself to the rest of the company. Jones easily saw that there was no hope of bringing them over to a contrary sentiment. After a short pause, he answered, I did not mean—No, damn it! I will not snivel neither. I was always true to my principles, and a friend to you all. But, since you are resolved to turn me out, why—good bye to you!

The expulsion of this man produced a remarkable improvement in the whole gang. Those who were before inclined to humanity, assumed new energy in proportion as they saw such sentiments likely to prevail. They had before suffered themselves to be overborne by the boisterous insolence of their antagonists; but now they adopted and with success a different conduct. Those who envied the ascendancy of their comrade, and therefore imitated his conduct, began to hesitate in their career. Stories were brought forward of the cruelty and brutality of Jones, both to men and animals, which had never before reached the ear of the leader. These stories I shall not repeat. They could excite only emotions of abhorrence and disgust, and
some

some of them argued a mind of such a stretch of depravity as to many readers would appear utterly incredible. And yet this man had his virtues. He was enterprising, persevering and faithful.

His removal was a considerable benefit to me. It would have been no small hardship to have been turned adrift immediately under my unfavourable circumstances, with the additional disadvantage of the wound I had received; and yet I could scarcely have ventured to remain under the same roof with a man to whom my appearance was as a guilty conscience, perpetually reminding him of his own offence and the counteraction of his leader. His profession accustomed him to a certain degree of indifference to consequences, and indulgence to the fallies of passion; and he might easily have found his opportunity to insult or injure me, when I should have had nothing but my own debilitated exertions to protect me.

Freed from this danger, I found my situation sufficiently fortunate for a man under my circumstances. It was attended with all the advantages for concealment my fondest imagination could have hoped; and it was by no means destitute of the benefits which arise from kindness and humanity. Nothing could be more unlike than the thieves I had seen in — gaol, and the thieves of my new residence. The latter were generally full of cheerfulness and merriment. They could expatiate freely wherever they thought proper. They could form plans and execute them. They consulted their own inclinations. They did not impose upon themselves the task, as is too often the case in human society, of seeming tacitly to approve that from which they suffered most; or, which is worse, of persuading themselves that all the wrongs they suffered were right; but were at open war with

with their oppressors. On the contrary the imprisoned felons I had lately seen were shut up like wild beasts in a cage, deprived of activity, and palsied with indolence. The occasional demonstrations that still remained of their former enterprising life, were the starts and convulsions of disease, not the meditated and consistent exertions of a mind in health. They had no more of hope, of project, of golden and animated dreams, but were reserved to the most dismal prospects, and forbidden to think upon any other topic. It is true that these two scenes were parts of one whole, the one the consummation, the hourly to be expected successor of the other. But the men I now saw were wholly inattentive to this, and in that respect appeared to have no intercourse with reflection or reason.

I might in one view, as I have said, congratulate myself upon my present residence; it answered completely the purposes of concealment. It was the seat of merriment and hilarity; but the hilarity that characterised it, produced no correspondent feelings in my bosom. The persons who composed this society, had each of them cast off all controul from established principle; their trade was terror, and their constant object to elude the vigilance of the community. The influence of these circumstances was visible in their character. I found among them benevolence and kindness; they were strongly susceptible of emotions of generosity. But, as their situation was precarious, their dispositions were proportionably fluctuating. Inured to the animosity of their species, they were irritable and passionate. Accustomed to exercise harshness towards the subject of their depredations, they did not always confine their brutality within that scope. They were habituated to consider
wounds,

wounds, and bludgeons and stabbing, as the obvious mode of surmounting every difficulty. Uninvolved in the debilitating routine of human affairs, they frequently displayed an energy, which from every impartial observer would have extorted veneration. Energy is perhaps of all qualities the most invaluable; and a just political system would possess the means of extracting from it thus circumstanced its beneficial qualities, instead of consigning it as now to unlimited destruction. We act like the chymist who should reject the finest ore, and employ none but what was sufficiently debased to fit it immediately for the vilest uses. But the energy of these men, such as I beheld it, was in the highest degree misapplied, unassisted by any liberal and enlightened views, and directed only to the most narrow and contemptible purposes.

The residence I have been describing might to many persons have appeared attended with intolerable inconveniences. But, exclusively of its advantages as a field for speculation, it was Elysium compared with that from which I had just escaped. Displeasing company, incommodious apartments, filthiness and riot, lost the circumstance by which they could most effectually disgust, when I was not compelled to remain with them. All hardships I could patiently endure, in comparison with the menace of a violent and untimely death. There was no suffering that I could not persuade myself to consider as trivial, except that which flowed from the tyranny, the frigid precaution, or the inhuman revenge of my own species.

My recovery advanced in the most favourable manner. The attention and kindness of my protector were incessant, and the rest caught the spirit from his example. The old woman who superintended the household, still retained her animosity. She

She considered me as the cause of the expulsion of Jones from the fraternity; Jones had been the object of her particular partiality; and, zealous as she was for the public concern, she thought an old and experienced sinner for a raw probationer but an ill exchange. Add to which, that her habits inclined her to moroseness and discontent, and that persons of her complexion seem unable to exist without some object upon which to employ the superfluity of their gall. She lost no opportunity upon the most trifling occasion of displaying her animosity, and ever and anon eyed me with a furious glance of canine hunger for my destruction. Nothing was more evidently mortifying to her than the procrastination of her malice; nor could she bear to think that a fierceness so gigantic and uncontrollable should show itself in nothing more terrific than the pigmy spite of a chamber-maid. For myself, I had been accustomed to the warfare of formidable adversaries and the encounter of alarming dangers; and what I saw of her spleen had not power sufficient to disturb my tranquillity.

As I recovered, I told my story, except so far as related to the detection of Mr. Falkland's eventful secret, to my protector. That particular I could not as yet prevail upon myself to disclose even in a situation like this, which seemed to preclude the possibility of its being made use of to the disadvantage of my persecutor. My present auditor however, whose habits of thinking were extremely opposite to those of Mr. Forester, did not from the obscurity which flowed from this reserve, deduce any unfavourable conclusion. His penetration was such as to afford little room for an impostor to hope to mislead him by a fictitious statement, and he confided in that penetration. So confiding, the simplicity and integrity of my manner carried conviction

viſtion to his mind, and inſured his good opinion and friendſhip.

He liſtened to my ſtory with eagernels, and commented on the ſeveral parts as I related them. He ſaid that this was only one freſh inſtance of the tyranny and perfidiouſneſs exerciſed by the powerful members of the community againſt thoſe who were leſs privileged than themſelves. Nothing could be more clear than their readineſs to ſacrifice the human ſpecies at large to their meaneſt intereſt or wildeſt caprice. Who that ſaw the ſituation in its true light would wait till their oppreſſors thought fit to decree their deſtruction, and not take arms in their defence while it was yet in their power? Which was moſt meritorious, the unreſiſting and daſtardly ſubmiſſion of a ſlave, or the enterpriſe and gallantry of the man who dared to aſſert his claims? Since by the partial adminiſtration of our laws innocence, when power was armed againſt it, had nothing better to hope for than guilt, what man of true courage would fail to ſet theſe laws at defiance, and, if he muſt ſuffer by their injuſtice, at leaſt take care that he had firſt ſhown his contempt of their yoke? For himſelf he ſhould certainly never have embraced his preſent calling, had he not been ſtimulated to it by theſe cogent and irreſiſtible reaſons; and he hoped, as experience had ſo forcibly brought a conviction of this ſort to my mind, that he ſhould for the future have the happineſs to aſſociate me to his purſuits.—It will preſently be ſeen how far theſe hopes were confirmed by the event.

Numerous were the precautions exerciſed by the gang of thieves with whom I now reſided to elude the vigilance of the ſatellites of juſtice. It was one of their rules to commit no depredations but at a conſiderable diſtance from the place of their
reſidence,

residence, and Jones had transgressed this regulation, in the attack to which I was indebted for my present asylum. After having possessed themselves of any booty, they took care in the sight of the persons whom they had robbed to pursue a route as nearly as possible opposite to that which led to their true haunts. The appearance of their place of residence, together with its environs was peculiarly desolate and forlorn, and it had the reputation of being haunted. The old woman I have described had long been its inhabitant, and was commonly supposed to be its only inhabitant; and her person well accorded with the rural ideas of a witch. Her lodgers never went out or came in but with the utmost circumspection, and generally by night. The lights which were occasionally seen from various parts of her habitation were by the country people regarded with horror as supernatural; and, if the noise of revelry at any time saluted their ears, it was imagined to proceed from a carnival of devils. With all these advantages the thieves did not venture to reside here but by intervals: sometimes they absented themselves for months, and resided in a different part of the country. The old woman sometimes attended them in these transportations, and sometimes remained; but in all cases her removal took place either sooner or later than theirs, so that the nicest observer could scarcely have traced any connection between her re-appearances and the alarms of depredation that were frequently given; and the festival of demons seemed to the terrified rustics indifferently to take place whether she were present or absent.

C H A P. VIII.

ONE day, while I continued in this situation, a circumstance occurred, which involuntarily attracted my attention. Two of our people had been sent to a town at some distance for the purpose of procuring us some things of which we were in want. After having delivered these to our landlady, they retired to one corner of the room, and, one of them pulling a printed paper from his pocket, they mutually occupied themselves in examining its contents. I was sitting in an easy chair by the fire, being considerably better than I had been, though still in a weak and languid state. Having read for a considerable time, they looked at me, and then at the paper, and then at me again. They then went out of the room together, as if to consult without interruption upon something which that paper suggested to them. Some time after they returned, and my protector, who happened to be above stairs, entered the room at the same instant.

Captain! said one of them with an air of pleasure, look here! we have found a prize! I believe it is as good as a bank note of a hundred guineas.

Mr. Raymond (that was his name) took the paper and read. He paused for a moment. He then crushed the paper in his hand; and, turning to the person from whom he had received it, said with the tone of a man confident in the success of his reasons,

What

What use have you for these hundred guineas? Are you in want? Are you in distress? Can you be contented to purchase them at the price of treachery? of violating the laws of hospitality?

Faith, captain, I do not very well know. After having violated other laws, I do not see why we should be frightened at an old saw. We pretend to judge for ourselves, and ought to be above shrinking from a bugbear of a proverb. Beside, this is a good deed, and I should think no more harm of being the ruin of such a thief, than of getting my dinner.

A thief! You talk of thieves!——

Not so fast, if you please. God defend that I should say a word against thieving as a general occupation! But one man steals in one way, and another in another. For my part, I go upon the highway, and take from any stranger I meet what it is a hundred to one he can very well spare. I see nothing to be found fault with in that. But I have as much conscience as another man. Because I laugh at assizes and great wigs and the gallows, and because I will not be frightened from an innocent action when the lawyers say me nay, does it follow that I am to have a fellow-feeling for pilferers, and rascally servants, and people that have neither justice nor principle? No: I have too much respect for the trade, not to be a foe to interlopers and people that so much the more deserve my hatred because the world calls them by my name.

You are wrong, Wilson! You certainly ought not to employ against people that you hate, supposing your hatred to be reasonable, the instrumentality of that law which in your practice you defy. Be consistent. Either be the friend of law, or its adversary. Depend upon it that, wherever there are laws at all, there will be laws against
such

such people as you and I. Either therefore we all of us deserve the vengeance of the law, or law is not the proper instrument of correcting the misdeeds of mankind. I tell you this, because I would fain have you aware that an informer or a king's evidence, a man who takes advantage of the confidence of another in order to betray him, who sells the life of his neighbour for money, or coward like, upon any pretence calls in the law to do that for him which he cannot or dares not do for himself, is the vilest of rascals. But in the present case, if your reasons were the best in the world, they do not apply.

While Mr. Raymond was speaking, the rest of the gang came into the room. He immediately turned to them and said,

My friends, here is a piece of intelligence that Wilson has just brought in, which with his leave I will lay before you.

Then, pulling the paper from his pocket, he continued: This is the description of a felon with the offer of a hundred guineas for his apprehension. Wilson picked it up at ——. By the time and other circumstances, but particularly by the minute description of his person, there can be no doubt but the object of it is our young friend, whose life I was a little while ago the instrument of saving. He is charged here with having taken advantage of the confidence of his patron and benefactor, to rob him of property to a large amount. Upon this charge he was committed to the county jail, from whence he made his escape about a fortnight ago without venturing to stand his trial, a circumstance which is stated by the advertiser as tantamount to a confession of his guilt.

My friends, I was acquainted with the particulars of this story some time before. This lad let me

me into his history at a time that he could not possibly have foreseen that he should stand in need of that precaution as an antidote against danger. He is not guilty of what is laid to his charge. Which of you is so ignorant as to suppose that his escape is any confirmation of his guilt? Who ever thinks, when he is apprehended for trial, of his innocence or guilt as being at all material to the issue? Who ever was fool enough to volunteer a trial, where those who are to decide think more of the horror of the thing of which he is accused than whether he was the person that did it; and where the nature of our motives is to be collected from a set of ignorant witnesses that no wise man would trust for a fair representation of the most indifferent action of his life?

The poor lad's story is a long one, and I will not trouble you with it now. But from that story it is as clear as the day, that, because he wished to leave the service of his master, because he had been perhaps a little too inquisitive in his master's concerns, and because, as I suspect, he had been trusted with some important secrets, his master conceived an antipathy against him. This antipathy gradually proceeded to such a length, as to induce the master to forge this vile accusation. He seems willing to hang the lad out of the way, rather than suffer him to go where he pleases or get beyond the reach of his power. Williams has told me the story with such ingenuoufness that I am as sure that he is guiltless of what they lay to his charge as that I am so myself. Nevertheless the man's servants who were called in to hear the accusation, and his relation, who as justice of the peace made out the mittimus, and who had the folly to think he could be impartial, gave it on his side with one voice, and thus afforded

Williams

Williams a sample of what he had to expect in the sequel.

Wilson, who when he received this paper had no previous knowledge of particulars, was for taking advantage of it for the purpose of earning the hundred guineas. Are you of that mind, now you have heard them? Will you for so paltry a consideration deliver up the lamb into the jaws of the wolf? Will you abet the purposes of this sanguinary rascal who, not contented with driving his late dependent from house and home, depriving him of character and all the ordinary means of subsistence, and leaving him almost without a refuge, still thirsts for his blood? If no other person have the courage to set limits to the tyranny of courts of justice, shall not we? Shall we, who earn our livelihood by generous daring, be indebted for a penny to the vile artifices of the informer? Shall we, against whom the whole species is in arms, refuse our protection to an individual, more exposed to, but still less deserving of their persecution than ourselves?

The representation of the captain produced an instant effect upon the whole company. They all exclaimed, Betray him! No, not for worlds! He is safe. We will protect him at the hazard of our lives. If fidelity and honour be banished from thieves, where shall they find refuge upon the face of the earth? Wilson in particular thanked the captain for his interference, and swore that he would rather part with his right hand, than injure so worthy a lad, or assist such an unheard of villainy. Saying this, he took me by the hand, and bade me fear nothing. Under their roof, no harm should ever befall me; and, even if the understrappers of the law should discover my retreat, they would to a man die in my defence, sooner than

than a hair of my head should be hurt. I thanked him most sincerely for his good will; but I was principally struck with the fervent benevolence of my benefactor. I told them, I found that my enemies were inexorable, and would never be appeased but with my blood; and I assured them with the most solemn and earnest veracity, that I had done nothing to deserve the persecution which was exercised against me.

The spirit and energy of Mr. Raymond had been such, as to leave no part for me to perform in repelling this unlooked-for danger. Nevertheless, it left a very serious impression upon my mind. I had always placed some confidence in the returning equity of Mr. Falkland. Though he persecuted me with bitterness, I could not help believing that he did it unwillingly, and I was persuaded it would not be for ever. A man, whose original principles had been so full of rectitude and honour, could not fail at some time or other to recollect the injustice of his conduct, and to remit his asperity. This idea had been always present to me, and had in no small degree conspired to instigate my exertions. I said, I will convince my persecutor that I am of more value than that I should be sacrificed purely by way of precaution. These expectations on my part had been encouraged by Mr. Falkland's behaviour upon the question of my imprisonment and by various particulars which had occurred since.

But this new incident gave to the subject a totally different appearance. I saw him now, not contented with blasting my reputation, confining me for a period in jail, and reducing me to the situation of a houseless vagabond, but still continuing his pursuit under these forlorn circumstances with unmitigable cruelty. Indignation and resentment
seemed

seemed now for the first time to penetrate my mind. I knew his misery so well, I was so fully acquainted with its cause, and so strongly impressed with the idea of its being unmerited, that, while I suffered so deeply, I still continued to pity, rather than hate my persecutor. But this incident introduced some change into my feelings. I said, Surely he might now believe that he had sufficiently disarmed me, and might at length suffer me to be at peace. At least ought he not to be contented to leave me to my fate, the perilous and uncertain condition of an escaped felon, instead of thus whetting the animosity and vigilance of my countrymen against me? Were his interference on my behalf in opposition to the stern severity of Mr. Forester, and his various acts of kindness since, a mere part that he played in order to lull me into patience? Was he perpetually haunted with the fear of an ample retaliation, and for that purpose did he personate remorse at the very moment that he was secretly keeping every engine at play that could secure my destruction? The very suspicion of such a fact filled me with inexpressible horror, and struck a sudden chill through every fibre of my frame.

Meanwhile my wound was by this time completely healed, and it became absolutely necessary that I should form some determination respecting the future. My habits of thinking were such as gave me an uncontrollable repugnance to the vocation of my hosts. I did not indeed feel all that aversion and abhorrence to the men that is commonly entertained. I saw and respected their good qualities and their virtues. I was by no means inclined to believe them worse men, or more inimical in their dispositions to the welfare of their species, than the generality of those that look down upon them with most censure. But, though I did
not

not cease to love them as individuals, my eyes were perfectly opened to their mistakes. If I should otherwise have been in danger of being misled, it was my fortune to have studied felons in a jail, before I studied them in their state of comparative prosperity; and this was an infallible antidote to the poison. I saw that in this profession were exerted uncommon energy, ingenuity and fortitude, and I could not help recollecting how admirably beneficial such qualities might be made in the great theatre of human affairs; while in their present direction they were thrown away upon purposes that could scarcely in any sense deserve the appellation of useful. Thieves appeared to me to commit a mistaken treason against the general welfare; at the same time that they were of all men the most foolish as to their own interests. The man who risks or sacrifices his life for the public welfare is rewarded with the testimony of an approving conscience; but persons who wantonly defy the institutions of their country for no public good, and whose private interest the least degree of sound judgment might prove to be a thousand times better promoted in every possible instance by a more legitimate proceeding, are in the same respect absurd and self-neglectful, as a man would be who should set himself up as a mark for a file of musqueteers to shoot at.

Viewing the subject in this light, I not only determined that I would have no share in their occupation myself, but thought I could not do less in return for the benefits I had received from them, than endeavour to dissuade them from an employment in which they must themselves be the greatest sufferers. My expostulation met with a various reception. All the persons to whom it was addressed had been tolerably successful in persuading themselves

themselves of the innocence of their calling; and what remained of doubt in their mind was smothered, and, so to speak, laboriously forgotten. Some of them laughed at my arguments as a ridiculous piece of missionary quixotism. Others, and particularly our captain, repelled them with the boldness of a man that knows he has got the strongest side. But this sentiment of ease and self-satisfaction did not long remain. They had been used to arguments derived from religion and the venerableness of law. They had long ago shaken these from them as so many prejudices. But my view of the subject appealed to principles which they could not contest, and had by no means the air of that customary reproof which is for ever dinned in our ears, without finding one responsive chord in our hearts. Finding themselves urged with objections unexpected and cogent, some of those to whom I addressed them began to grow peevish and impatient of the importunate remonstrance. But this was by no means the case with Mr. Raymond. He was possessed of a candour that I have seldom seen equalled. He was surprised to hear objections so powerful to that which as a matter of speculation he believed he had examined on all sides. He revolved them with impartiality and care. He admitted them slowly, but he at length fully admitted them. He had now but one rejoinder in reserve.

Alas, Williams, said he, it would have been fortunate for me if these views had been presented to me previously to my embracing my present profession. It is now too late. Those very laws, which by a perception of their iniquity drove me to what I am, now preclude my return. God, we are told, judges of men by what they are at the period of judgment, and, whatever be their crimes, if they have seen and abjured the folly of those crimes, receives them to favour. But the institutions of

countries that profess to worship this God, admit no such distinctions. They leave no room for amendment, and seem to have a brutal delight in confounding the demerits of offenders. It signifies not what is the character of the individual at the hour of trial. How changed, how spotless, and how useful avails him nothing. If they discover at the distance of fourteen * or of forty years † an action for which the law ordains that his life shall be the forfeit, though the interval should have been spent with the purity of a saint and the devotedness of a patriot, they disdain to enquire into it. What then can I do? Am I not compelled to go on in folly, having once begun?

* Eugene Aram. See Annual Register, for 1759.

† William Andrew Horne. Ditto, ditto.

C H A P. IX.

I WAS extremely affected by this plea. I could only answer that Mr. Raymond must himself be the best judge of the course it became him to hold; I trusted the case was not so desperate as he imagined. This subject was pursued no farther, and was in some degree driven from my thoughts by an incident of a very extraordinary nature. I have already mentioned the animosity that was entertained against me by the infernal portress of this solitary mansion. Jones, the expelled member of the gang, had been her particular favourite. She submitted to his exile indeed, because her genius felt subdued by the energy and inherent greatness of Mr. Raymond; but she submitted with murmuring and discontent. Not daring to resent the conduct of the principal in this affair, she collected all the bitterness of her spirit against me. To the unpardonable offence I had thus committed in the first instance, were added the reasonings I had lately offered against the profession of robbery. Robbery was a fundamental article in the creed of this hoary veteran, and she listened to my objections with the same unaffected astonishment and horror, that an old woman of other habits would listen to one who objected to the agonies and dissolution of the Creator of the world, or to the garment of imputed righteousness prepared to envelope the souls of the elect. Like the religious bigot, she was sufficiently disposed to avenge a hostility against her opinions with the weapons of sublunary warfare.

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warfare. Meanwhile I had smiled at the impotence of her malice, as an object of contempt, rather than alarm. She perceived, as I imagine, the slight estimation in which I held her, and this did not a little increase the perturbation of her thoughts.

One day I was left alone with no other person in the house than this swarthy sybil. The thieves had set out upon an expedition about two hours after sunset on the preceding evening, and had not returned, as they were accustomed to do, before day-break the next morning. This was a circumstance that sometimes occurred, and therefore did not produce any extraordinary alarm. At one time the scent of prey would lead them beyond the bounds they had prescribed themselves, and at another the fear of pursuit; the life of a thief is always uncertain. The old woman had been preparing during the night for the meal to which they would expect to sit down, as soon as might be after their return.

For myself I had learned from their habits to be indifferent to the regular return of the different parts of the day, and in some degree to turn day into night, and night into day. I had been now several weeks in this residence, and the season was considerably advanced. I had passed some hours during the night in ruminating on my situation. The character and manners of the men among whom I lived were disgusting to me. Their brutal ignorance, their ferocious habits, and their coarse behaviour, instead of becoming more tolerable by custom, hourly added force to my original aversion. The uncommon vigour of their minds and acuteness of their invention in the business they pursued, compared with the odiousness of that business and their habitual depravity, awakened in me sensations too painful to be endured. Moral
disapprobation,

disapprobation, at least in a mind unsubdued by philosophy, I found to be one of the most fertile sources of disquiet and uneasiness. From this pain the society of Mr. Raymond by no means relieved me. He was indeed eminently superior to the vices of the rest; but I did not less exquisitely feel how much he was out of his place, how disproportionably associated, or how contemptibly employed. I had attempted to counteract the errors under which he and his companions laboured; but I had found the obstacles that presented themselves, much greater than I had imagined.

What was I to do? Was I to wait the issue of this my missionary undertaking, or was I to withdraw myself immediately? When I withdrew, ought that to be done privately, or with an open avowal of my design, and an endeavour to supply by the force of example what was deficient in my arguments? It was certainly improper, as I declined all participation in the pursuits of these men, did not contribute with my person to the risk by which they subsisted, and had no congeniality with their habits, that I should continue to reside with them any longer than was absolutely necessary. There was one circumstance that rendered this deliberation particularly pressing. They intended in a few days removing from their present habitation, to a haunt to which they were accustomed in a distant county. If I did not propose to continue with them, it would perhaps be wrong to accompany them in this removal. The state of calamity to which my inexorable persecutor had reduced me, had made the encounter even of a den of robbers a very fortunate adventure. But the time that had since elapsed, had probably been sufficient to relax the keenness of the quest that was made after me. I sighed for that solitude and obscurity, that
retreat

retreat from the vexations of the world and the voice even of common fame, which I had proposed to myself when I broke my prison.

Such were the meditations which now occupied my mind. At length I grew fatigued with continued contemplation, and to relieve myself, I pulled out a pocket Horace, the legacy of my beloved Brightwell! I read with avidity the epistle in which he so beautifully describes to Fuscus the grammarian, the pleasures of rural tranquillity and independence. By this time the sun rose from behind the eastern hills, and I opened my casement to contemplate it. The day commenced with peculiar brilliancy, and was accompanied with all those charms, which the poets of nature, as they have been styled, have so much delighted to describe. There was something in this scene, particularly as succeeding to the active exertions of intellect, that soothed the mind to composure. Insensibly a confused reverie invaded my faculties, I withdrew from the window, threw myself upon the bed, and fell asleep.

I do not recollect the precise images which in this situation passed through my thoughts, but I know that they concluded with the idea of some person, the agent of Mr. Falkland, approaching to assassinate me. This thought had probably been suggested, by the project I meditated of entering once again into the world, and throwing myself within the sphere of his possible vengeance. I imagined that the design of the murderer was to come upon me by surprise, that I was aware of this design, and yet by some fascination had no thought of evading it. I heard the steps of the murderer as he cautiously approached. I seemed to listen to his constrained, yet audible breathings. He came up to the corner where I was placed, and then

then stopped. The idea became too terrible, I started, opened my eyes, and beheld the execrable hag before mentioned standing over me with a butcher's hatchet. I shifted my situation with a speed that seemed too swift for volition, and the blow already aimed at my skull, sunk impotent upon the bed. Before she could wholly recover her posture I sprung upon her, seized hold of the weapon, and had nearly wrested it from her. But in a moment she resumed her strength and her desperate purpose, and we had a furious struggle, she impelled by inveterate malice, and I resisting for my life. Her vigour was truly Amazonian, and at no time had I ever occasion to contend with a more formidable opponent. Her glance was sudden and exact, and the shock with which from time to time she impelled her whole frame, inconceivably vehement. At length I was victorious, took from her her instrument of death, and threw her upon the ground. Till now the sobriety of her exertions had curbed her rage; but now she gnashed with her teeth, her eyes seemed as if starting from their sockets, and her body heaved with uncontrollable insanity.

Rascal! devil! she exclaimed, what do you mean to do to me?

'Till now the scene had passed uninterrupted by a single word.

Nothing, I replied: begone, infernal witch! and leave me to myself.

Leave you! No: I will thrust my fingers through your ribs, and drink your blood!—You conquer me!—Ha, ha!—Yes, yes! you shall!—I will sit upon you, and press you to hell! I will roast you with brimstone, and dash your entrails into your eyes!—Ha, ha!—ha!

Saying this, she sprung up, and prepared to attack me with redoubled fury. I seized her hands,
and

and compelled her to sit upon the bed. Thus restrained, she continued to express the tumult of her thoughts by grinning, by certain furious motions of her head, and by occasional vehement efforts to disengage herself from my grasp. These contortions and starts were of the nature of those fits, in which the patients are commonly supposed to need three or four persons to hold them. But I found by experience that, under the circumstances in which I was placed, my single strength was sufficient. The spectacle of her emotions was inconceivably frightful. Her violence at length however began to abate, and she became persuaded of the hopelessness of the contest.

Let me go! said she. Why do you hold me? I will not be held!

I wanted you gone from the first, replied I. Are you contented to go now?

Yes, I tell you, misbegotten villain! Yes, rascal!

I immediately loosed my hold. She flew to the door, and, holding it in her hand; said, I will be the death of you yet: you shall not be your own man twenty-four hours longer! With these words she shut the door, and locked it upon me. An action so totally unexpected startled me. Whither was she gone? What was it she intended? To perish by the machinations of such a hag as this, was a thought not to be endured. Death in any form, brought upon us by surprise, and for which the mind has had no time to prepare, is inexpressibly terrible. My thoughts wandered in breathless horror and confusion, and all within was uproar. I endeavoured to break the door, but in vain. I went round the room in search of some tool to assist me. At length I rushed against it with a desperate effort, to which it yielded, and had nearly thrown me from the top of the stairs to the bottom.

I descended

I descended with all possible caution and vigilance. I entered the kitchen, but it was deserted. I searched every other apartment in vain. I went out of the house; still I discovered nothing of my late assailant. It was extraordinary: what could be become of her? what was I to conclude from her disappearance? I reflected on her parting menace. "I should not be my own man twenty-four hours longer." It was mysterious; it did not seem to be the menace of assassination.

Suddenly the recollection of the hand bill brought to us by Wilson rushed upon my memory. Was it possible that she alluded to that in her parting words? Would she set out upon such an expedition by herself? Was it not dangerous to the whole fraternity, if without the smallest precaution she should bring the officers of justice into the midst of them? It was perhaps improbable she would engage in an undertaking thus desperate. It was not however easy to answer for the conduct of a person in her state of mind. Should I wait, and risk the preservation of my liberty upon the issue?

To this question I returned an immediate negative. I had resolved in a very short time to quit my present situation, and the difference of a little sooner or a little later could not be very material. It promised to be neither agreeable nor prudent, for me to remain under the roof with a person who had manifested such a fierce and inexpiable hostility. But the consideration which had inexpressibly the most weight with me, belonged to the ideas of imprisonment, trial and death. The longer they had formed the subject of my contemplation, the more forcibly was I impelled to avoid them. I had entered upon a system of action for that purpose; I had already made many sacrifices; and I believed that I should never miscarry in this project through

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any

any neglect of mine. The thought of what was reserved for me by my prosecutors sickened my very soul; and the more intimately I was acquainted with oppression and injustice, the more deeply was I penetrated with the abhorrence to which they are entitled.

Such were the reasons that determined me, instantly, abruptly, without leave-taking or acknowledgment for the peculiar and repeated favours I had received, to quit a habitation to which for six weeks I had apparently been indebted for protection, from trial, conviction and an ignominious death. I had come hither penniless; I quitted my abode with the sum of a few guineas in my possession, Mr. Raymond having insisted upon my taking a share, at the time that each man received his dividend from the common stock. Though I had reason to suppose that the heat of the pursuit against me would be somewhat remitted by the time that had elapsed, the magnitude of the mischief that in an unfavourable event might fall on me, determined me to neglect no imaginable precaution. I recollected the hand bill which was the source of my present alarm, and conceived that one of the principal dangers that threatened me was the recognition of my person, either by such as had previously known me, or even by strangers. It seemed prudent therefore to disguise it as effectually as I could. For this purpose I had recourse to a parcel of tattered garments that lay in one corner of our habitation. The disguise I chose was that of a beggar. Upon this plan I threw off my shirt. I tied a handkerchief about my head, with which I took care to cover one of my eyes. Over this I drew a piece of an old woollen night-cap. I selected the worst apparel I could find, and this I reduced to a still more deplorable condition,

dition, by rents that I purposely made in various places. Thus equipped, I surveyed myself in a looking-glass. I had rendered my appearance complete, nor would any one have suspected that I was not one of the fraternity to which I assumed to belong. I said, This is the form in which tyranny and injustice oblige me to seek for refuge; but better, a thousand times better is it, thus to incur contempt with the dregs of mankind, than to trust to the tender mercies of our superiors!

C H A P. X.

THE only rule that I laid down to myself in traversing the forest was to take a direction as opposite as possible to that which led to the scene of my late imprisonment. After about two hours walking I arrived at the termination of this ruder scene, and reached that part of the county which is inclosed and cultivated. Here I sat down by the side of a brook, and, pulling out a crust of bread which I had brought away with me, rested and refreshed myself. While I continued in this place, I began to ruminate upon the plan I should lay down for my future proceedings; and my propensity now led me, as it had done in a former instance, to fix upon the capital which I believed, beside its other recommendations, would prove the safest place for concealment. During these thoughts I saw a couple of peasants passing at a small distance, and enquired of them respecting the London road. By their description I understood that the most immediate way would be to repass a part of the forest, and that it would be necessary to approach considerably nearer to the county town than I was at the spot which I had at present reached. I did not imagine that this could be a circumstance of considerable importance. My disguise appeared to be a sufficient security against momentary danger; and I therefore took a path, though not the most direct one, which led towards the point they suggested.

The

The occurrences of the day were not very remarkable. As I passed along a road which lay in my way for a few miles, I saw a carriage advancing in the opposite direction. I debated with myself for a moment, whether I should pass it without notice, or should take this occasion by voice or gesture of making an essay of my trade. This idle disquisition was however speedily driven from my mind when I perceived that the carriage was Mr. Falkland's. The suddenness of the encounter struck me with terror, though perhaps it would have been difficult for calm reflection to have discovered any considerable danger. I withdrew from the road, and skulked behind a hedge till it should have completely gone by. I was too much occupied with my own feelings to venture to examine whether or no the terrible adversary of my peace were in the carriage. I persuaded myself that he was. I looked after the equipage, and exclaimed, There you may see the luxurious accommodations and appendages of guilt, and here the forlornness that waits upon innocence!—I was to blame to imagine that my case was singular in that respect. I only mention it to show how the most trivial circumstance contributes to embitter the cup to the man of adversity. The thought however was a transient one. I had learned this lesson from my sufferings, not to indulge in the luxury of discontent. As my mind recovered its tranquillity, I began to enquire whether the phenomenon I had just seen could have any relation to myself. But though my mind was extremely inquisitive and versatile in this respect, I could discover no sufficient ground upon which to build any judgment in the case.

At night I entered a little public house at the extremity of a village, and, seating myself in a corner of the kitchen, asked for some bread and cheese.

cheese. While I was sitting at my repast, three or four labourers came in for a little refreshment after their work. Ideas respecting the inequality of rank pervade every order in society; and, as my appearance was meaner and more contemptible than theirs, I found it expedient to give way to these gentry of a village alehouse, and remove to an obscurer station. I was surprised and not a little startled to find them fall almost immediately into conversation about my history, whom with a slight variation of circumstances they styled the notorious housebreaker, Kit Williams.

Damn the fellow, said one of them, one never hears of any thing else. O' my life, I think he makes talk for the whole county.

That is very true, replied another. I was at the market town to-day to sell some oats for my master, and there was a hue and cry, some of them thought they had got him, but it was a false alarm.

That hundred guineas is a fine thing, rejoined the first. I should be glad if so be as how it fell in my way.

For the matter of that, said the traveller, I should like a hundred guineas as well as another. But I cannot be of your mind for all that. I should never think money would do me any good, that had been the means of bringing a Christian creature to the gallows.

Poh, that is all my granny! Some folks must be hanged to keep the wheels of our state folks a-going. Beside, I could forgive the fellow all his other robberies, but that he should have been so hardened as to break the house of his own master at last, that is too bad.

Lord, lord, replied the other, I see you know nothing of the matter! I will tell you how it was, as I learned it at the town. I question whether he
ever

ever robbed his master at all. But hark you! you must know as how that squire Falkland was once tried for murder——

Yes, yes, we know that.

Well, he was as innocent as the child unborn. But I suppose as how he is a little soft or so. And so Kit Williams—Kit is a devilish cunning fellow, you may judge that from his breaking prison no less than five times,——so, I say, he threatened to bring his master to trial at the 'sizes all over again, and so frightened him, and got money from him at divers times. Till at last one squire Forester, a relation of t'other, found it all out. And he made the hell of a rumpus, and sent away Kit to prison in a twinkly, and I believe he would have been hanged; for when two squires lay their heads together, they do not much matter law, you know; or else they twist the law to their own ends, I cannot exactly say which; but it is much at one, when the poor fellow's breath is out of his body.

Though this story was very circumstantially told and with a sufficient detail of particulars, it did not pass unquestioned. Each man maintained the justness of his own statement, and the dispute was long and obstinately pursued. Historians and commentators at length withdrew together. The terrors with which I was seized when this conversation began, were extreme. I stole a side-long glance to one quarter and another, to observe if any man's attention were turned upon me. I trembled as if in an ague fit; and at first felt continual impulses to quit the house and take to my heels. I drew closer in my corner, held aside my head, and seemed from time to time to undergo a total revolution of the animal economy.

At

At length the tide of ideas turned. Perceiving they paid no attention to me, the recollection of the full security my disguise afforded recurred strongly to my thoughts, and I began inwardly to exult, though I did not venture to obtrude myself to examination. By degrees I began to be amused at the absurdity of their tales, and the variety of the falsehoods I heard asserted around me. My soul seemed to expand; I felt a pride in the self-possession and lightness of heart with which I could listen to the scene; and I determined to prolong and heighten the enjoyment. Accordingly, when they were withdrawn, I addressed myself to our hostess, a buxom, bluff, good humoured widow, and asked what sort of a man this Kit Williams might be? She replied that, as she was informed, he was as handsome, likely a lad, as any in four counties round; and that she loved him for his cleverness, by which he outwitted all the keepers they could set over him, and made his way through stone walls, as if they were so many cobwebs. I observed that the country was so thoroughly alarmed, that I did not think it possible he should escape the pursuit that was set up after him. This idea excited her immediate indignation; she said she hoped he was far enough away by this time, but, if not, she wished the curse of God might light on them that betrayed so noble a fellow to a fatal end!—Though she little thought that the person of whom she spoke was so near her, yet the sincere and generous warmth with which she interested herself in my behalf, gave me considerable pleasure. With this sensation to sweeten the fatigues of the day and the calamities of my situation, I retired from the kitchen to a neighbouring barn, laid myself down upon some straw, and fell into a profound sleep.

The

The next day about noon as I was pursuing my journey, I was overtaken by two men on horseback, who stopped me to enquire respecting a person that they supposed might have passed along that road. As they proceeded in their description I perceived with astonishment and terror that I was myself the person to whom their questions related. They entered into a tolerably accurate detail of the various characteristics by which my person might best be distinguished. They said, they had good reason to believe that I had been seen at a place in that county the very day before. While they were speaking, a third person who had fallen behind came up, and my alarm was greatly increased upon seeing that this person was the servant of Mr. Forester, who had visited me in prison about a fortnight before my escape. My best resource in this crisis was composure and apparent indifference. It was fortunate for me that my disguise was so complete, that the eye of Mr. Falkland itself could scarcely have penetrated it. I had been aware for some time before that this was a refuge which events might make necessary, and had endeavoured to arrange and methodise my ideas upon the subject. From my youth I had possessed a considerable facility in the art of imitation; and, when I quitted my retreat under the roof of Mr. Raymond, I adopted along with my beggar's attire a peculiar slouching and clownish gait to be used whenever there should appear the least chance of my being observed, together with an Irish brogue which I had had an opportunity of studying in my prison. Such are the miserable expedients and so great the studied artifice, which man, who never deserves the name of manhood but in proportion as he is erect and independent, may find it necessary to employ, for the purpose of eluding the inexorable animosity

animosity and unfeeling tyranny of his fellow man! I had made use of this brogue, though I have not thought it necessary to write it down in my narrative, in the conversation of the village alehouse. Mr. Forester's servant as he came up observed that his companions were engaged in conversation with me; and, guessing at the subject, asked whether they had gained any intelligence. He added to the information at which they had already hinted, that a resolution was taken to spare neither diligence nor expence for my discovery and apprehension, and that they were satisfied that, if I were above ground and in the kingdom, it would be impossible for me to escape them.

Every new incident that had occurred to me, thus tended to impress upon my mind the extreme danger to which I was exposed. I could almost have imagined that I was the sole subject of general attention, and that the whole world was in arms to exterminate me. The very idea tingled through every fibre of my frame. But, terrible as it appeared to my imagination, it did but give new energy to my purpose; and I determined that I would not voluntarily resign the field, that is properly speaking my neck to the cord of the executioner, notwithstanding the greatest superiority in my assailants. But the incidents which had befallen me, though they did not change my purpose, induced me to examine over again the means by which that purpose might be effected. The consequence of this revival was to determine me to bend my course to the nearest sea-port on the west side of the island, and transport myself to Ireland. I cannot now tell what it was that inclined me to prefer this scheme to that which I had originally formed. Perhaps the latter, which had been for some time present to my imagination, for that reason

son appeared the more obvious of the two; and I found an appearance of complexity, which the mind did not stay to explain to itself, in substituting the other in its stead.

I arrived without farther impediment at the place from which I intended to sail, enquired for a vessel which I found ready to put to sea in a few hours, and agreed with the captain for my passage. Ireland had to me the disadvantage of being a dependency of the British government, and therefore a place of less security than most other countries which are divided from it by the ocean. To judge from the diligence with which I seemed to be pursued in England, it was not improbable that the zeal of my persecutors might follow me to the other side of the channel. It was however sufficiently agreeable to my mind that I was upon the point of being removed one step farther from the danger which was so grievous to my imagination.

Could there be any peril in the short interval that was to elapse before the vessel was to weigh anchor, and quit the English shore? Probably not. A very short time had intervened between my determination for the sea and my arrival at this place; and, if any new alarm had been given to my persecutors, it proceeded from the old woman a very few days before. I hoped I had anticipated their diligence. Meanwhile that I might neglect no reasonable precaution, I went instantly on board, resolved that I would not unnecessarily, by walking in the streets of the town, expose myself to any untoward accident.

CHAP. XI.

THE time was now nearly elapsed that was prescribed for our stay, and orders for weighing anchor were every moment expected, when we were hailed by a boat from the shore with two other men in it beside those that rowed. They entered our vessel in an instant. They were officers of justice. The passengers, five persons beside myself, were ordered upon deck for examination. I was inexpressibly disturbed at the occurrence of such a circumstance in so unseasonable a moment. I took it for granted that it was of me that they were in search. Was it possible that by any unaccountable accident they should have got an intimation of my disguise? It was infinitely more distressing to encounter them upon this narrow stage and under these pointed circumstances, than, as I had before encountered my pursuers, under the appearance of an indifferent person. My recollection however did not forsake me. I confided in my conscious disguise and my Irish brogue, as a rock of dependence against all accidents.

No sooner did we appear upon deck than to my great consternation I could observe the attention of our guests principally turned upon me. They asked a few frivolous questions of such of my fellow passengers as happened to be nearest to them; and then turning to me enquired my name, who I was, whence I came, and what had brought me there? I had scarcely opened my mouth to reply, when

when with one consent they laid hold of me, said I was their prisoner, and declared that my accent, together with the correspondence of my person, would be sufficient to convict me before any court in England. I was hurried out of the vessel into the boat in which they came, and seated between them, as if by way of precaution lest I should spring overboard and by any means escape them.

I now took it for granted that I was once more in the power of Mr. Falkland, and the idea was inexpressibly mortifying and afflictive to my imagination. Escape from his pursuit, freedom from his tyranny, were objects upon which my whole soul was bent; could no human ingenuity and exertion effect them? Did his power reach through all space, and his eye penetrate every concealment? Was he like that mysterious being, to protect us from whose fierce revenge mountains and hills we are told might fall on us in vain! No idea is more heart-sickening and tremendous than this. But in my case it was not a subject of reasoning or of faith; I could derive no comfort either openly from unbelief, or secretly from the remoteness and incomprehensibility of the conception; it was an affair of sense; I felt the fangs of the tyger striking deep into my heart.

But, though this impression were at first exceedingly strong, and accompanied with its usual attendants in dejection and pusillanimity of spirit, yet my mind soon began as it were mechanically, to turn upon the consideration of the distance between this sea-port and my county prison, and the various opportunities of escape that might offer themselves in the interval. My first duty was to avoid betraying myself more than it might afterwards appear I was betrayed already. It was possible that, though apprehended, my apprehension might

might have been determined on upon some slight score, and that by my dexterity I might render my dismissal as sudden as my arrest had been. It was even possible that I had been seized through a mistake, and that the present measure might have no connection with Mr. Falkland's affair. Upon every supposition it was my business to gain information, and not to communicate it.

I soon found the benefits of this resolution. In my passage from the ship to the town I did not utter a word. My conductors commented on my sulkeness, but remarked that it would avail me nothing, I should infallibly swing, as it was never known that any body got off, who was tried for robbing his majesty's mail. It is easy to conceive the lightness of heart which was communicated to me by these words: I persisted however in the silence I had meditated. From the rest of their conversation, which was sufficiently voluble, I learned that the mail from Edinburgh to London had been robbed about ten days before by two Irishmen, that one of them was already secured, and that I was taken up upon suspicion of being the other. They had a description of his person which, though, as I afterwards found, it disagreed from mine in several material articles, appeared to them to tally to the minutest tittle. The intelligence that the whole proceeding against me was founded in a mistake, took an oppressive load from my mind. I believed that I should immediately be able to establish my innocence to the satisfaction of any magistrate in the kingdom; and, though crossed in my plans, and thwarted in my design of quitting the island even after I was already at sea, this was but a trifling inconvenience compared with what I had had but too much reason to fear.

As soon as we came ashore I was conducted to the house of a justice of peace, a man who had formerly been the captain of a collier, but who, having been successful in the world, had quitted this wandering life, and for some years had had the honour to represent his majesty's person. We were detained for some time in a sort of anti-room, waiting his reverence's leisure. The persons by whom I had been taken up were experienced in their trade, and insisted upon employing this interval in searching me, in presence of two of his worship's servants. They found upon me fifteen guineas and some silver. They required me to strip myself perfectly naked, that they might examine whether I had bank notes concealed any where about my person. They took up the detached parcels of my miserable attire as I threw it from me, and felt them one by one to discover whether the articles of which they were in search might by any device be sown up in them. To all this I submitted without murmuring. It might probably come to the same thing at last, and summary justice was sufficiently coincident with my views, my principal object being to get as soon as possible out of the clutches of the respectable persons who now had me in custody.

This operation was scarcely completed, before we were directed to be ushered into his worship's apartment. My accusers opened the charge, and told him that they had been ordered to this town upon an intimation that one of the persons who robbed the Edinburgh mail was to be found here; and that they had taken me on board a vessel which was by this time under sail for Ireland. Well, says his worship, that is your story; now let us hear what account the gentleman gives of himself. What is your name, ha, firrah? and from what

what part of Tipperary are you pleased to come? I had already taken my determination upon this article; and, the moment I learned the particulars of the charge against me, resolved, for the present at least, to lay aside my Irish accent, and speak my native tongue. This I had done in the very few words I had spoken to my conductors in the anti-room: they stared at the metamorphosis, but they had gone too far for it to be possible they should retract in consistence with their honour. I now told the justice that I was no Irishman, nor had ever been in that country: I was a native of England. This occasioned a consulting of the deposition in which my person was supposed to be described, and which my conductors had brought along with them for their direction. To be sure that required that the offender should be an Irishman.

Observing his worship hesitate, I thought this was the time to push the matter a little farther. I referred to the paper, and shewed him that the description neither tallied as to height nor complexion. But then it did as to years and the colour of the hair; and it was not this gentleman's habit, as he informed me, to squabble about trifles, or to let a man's neck out of the halter for a pretended flaw of a few inches in his stature. If a man were too short, he said, there was no remedy like a little stretching. The miscalculation in my case happened to be the opposite way, but his reverence did not think proper to lose his jest. Upon the whole he was somewhat at a loss how to proceed.

My conductors observed this, and began to tremble for the reward, which two hours ago they thought as good as in their own pocket. To retain me in custody they judged to be a safe speculation; if it turned out a mistake at last, they felt
little

little apprehension of a suit for false imprisonment from a poor man accoutred as I was in rags. They therefore urged his worship to comply with their views. They told him that to be sure the evidence against me did not prove so strong, as for their part they heartily wished it had, but that there were a number of suspicious circumstances respecting me. When I was brought up to them upon the deck of the vessel, I spoke as fine an Irish brogue as one shall hear in a summer's day; and now all at once there was not the least particle of it left. In searching me they had found upon me fifteen guineas; how should a poor beggar lad, such as I appeared, come honestly by fifteen guineas? Beside, when they had stripped me naked, though my dress was so shabby, my skin had all the sleekness of a gentleman. In fine, for what purpose could a poor beggar, who had never been in Ireland in his life, want to transport himself to that country? It was as clear as the sun that I was no better than I should be. This reasoning, together with some significant winks and gestures between the justice and the plaintiffs, brought him over to their way of thinking. He said, I must go to Warwick, where it seems the other robber was at present in custody, and be confronted with him; and if then every thing appeared fair and satisfactory, I should be discharged.

No intelligence could be more terrible than that which was contained in these words. That I, who had found the whole country in arms against me, who was exposed to a pursuit so peculiarly vigilant and penetrating, should now be dragged to the very centre of the kingdom, without power of accommodating myself to circumstances, and under the immediate custody of the officers of justice, seemed to my ears almost the same thing as if they had pronounced upon me a sentence of death! I

strenuously urged the injustice of this proceeding. I observed to the magistrate that it was impossible I should be the person at whom the description pointed. It required an Irishman; I was no Irishman. It described a person shorter than I; a circumstance of all others the least capable of being counterfeited. There was not the slightest reason for detaining me in custody. I had been already disappointed of my voyage and lost the money I had paid down through the officiousness of these gentlemen in apprehending me. I assured his worship that every delay under my circumstances was of the utmost importance to me. It was impossible to devise a greater injury to be inflicted on me, than the proposal that, instead of being permitted to proceed upon my voyage, I should be sent under arrest into the heart of the kingdom.

My remonstrances were in vain. The justice was by no means inclined to digest the being expostulated with in this manner by a person in the habiliments of a beggar. In the midst of my address he would have silenced me for my impertinence, but that I spoke with an earnestness with which he was wholly unable to contend. When I had finished, he told me that it was all to no purpose, and that it might have been better for me if I had shown myself less insolent. It was clear that I was a vagabond and a suspicious person. The more earnest I showed myself to get off, the more reason there was he should keep me fast. Perhaps after all I should turn out to be the felon in question. But, if I was not that, he had no doubt I was worse; a poacher, or for what he knew a murderer. He had a kind of a notion that he had seen my face before about some such affair; out of all doubt I was an old offender. He had it in his choice to send me to hard labour as a vagrant upon the strength of my appearance and the contradictions

tions in my story, or to order me to Warwick; and out of the spontaneous goodness of his disposition he chose the milder alternative. He could assure me I should not slip through his fingers. It was of more benefit to his majesty's government to hang one such fellow as he suspected me to be, than out of misguided tenderness to concern oneself for the good of all the beggars in the nation.

Finding that it was impossible to work on a man, so fully impressed with his own dignity and importance and my utter insignificance, in the way I desired, I claimed that at least the money taken from my person should be restored to me. This was granted. His worship perhaps suspected that he had stretched a point in what he had already done, and was therefore the less-unwilling to relax in this incidental circumstance. My conductors did not oppose themselves to this indulgence, for a reason that will appear in the sequel. The justice however enlarged upon his clemency in this proceeding. He did not know whether he was not exceeding the spirit of his commission in complying with my demand. So much money in my possession could not be honestly come by. But it was his temper to soften, as far as could be done with propriety, the strict letter of the law.

There were cogent reasons why the gentlemen who had originally taken me into custody, chose that I should continue in their custody, when my examination was over. Every man is in his different mode susceptible to a sense of honour; and they did not choose to encounter the disgrace that would accrue to them if justice had been done. Every man is in some degree influenced by the love of power; and they were willing I should owe any benefit I received, to their sovereign grace and benignity, and not to the mere reason of the case. It was not however an unsubstantial honour and bar-

ren power that formed the object of their pursuit: no, their views were deeper than that. In a word, though they chose that I should retire from the seat of justice as I had come before it, a prisoner, yet the tenour of my examination had obliged them in spite of themselves to suspect, that I was innocent of the charge they alleged against me. Apprehensive therefore that the hundred guineas that had been offered as a reward for taking the robber, was completely out of the question in the present business, they were contented to strike at smaller game. Having conducted me to an inn, and given directions respecting a vehicle for the journey, they took me aside, while one of them addressed me in the following manner:

You see, my lad, how the case stands; heigh for Warwick is the word! and, when we are got there, what may happen then I will not pretend for to say. Whether you are innocent or no is no business of mine; but you are not such a chicken as to suppose, if so be as you are innocent, that that will make your game altogether sure. You say, your business calls you another way, and as how you are in haste: I have not the heart to cross any man in his concerns, if I can help it. If therefore you will give us them there fifteen shiners, why snug is the word. They are of no use to you; a beggar, you know, is always at home. For the matter of that we could have had them in the way of business as you saw at the justice's. But I am a man of principle; I loves to do things above board, and scorns to extort a shilling from any man.

He who is tinctured with principles of moral discrimination, is apt upon occasion to be run away with by his feelings in that respect, and to forget the immediate interest of the moment. I confess that the first sentiment excited in my mind by this
overture

overture was that of indignation. I was irresistably impelled to give utterance to this feeling, and postpone for a moment the consideration of the future. I replied with the severity which so base a proceeding appeared to deserve. My bear-leaders were considerably surpris'd with my firmness, but seem'd to think it beneath them to contest with me the principles I deliver'd. He who had made the overture contented himself with replying, Well, well, my lad, do as you will; you are not the first man that has been hang'd rather than part with a few guineas. His words did not pass unheeded by me. They were strikingly applicable to my situation, and I was determin'd not to suffer the occasion to escape me unimproved.

The pride of these gentlemen however was too great to admit of farther parley for the present. They left me abruptly; having first order'd an old man, the father of the landlady, to stay in the room with me while they were absent. The old man they order'd for security to lock the door and put the key in his pocket, at the same time mentioning below stairs the station in which they had left me, that the people of the house might have an eye upon what went forward, and not suffer me to escape. What was the intention of this manœuvre I am unable certainly to pronounce. Probably it was a sort of compromise between their pride and their avarice, being desirous for some reason or other to drop me as soon as convenient, and therefore determin'd to wait the result of my private meditations on the proposal they had made.

C H A P. XI.

THEY were no sooner withdrawn than I cast my eye upon the old man, and found something extremely venerable and interesting in his appearance. His form was above the middle size. It indicated that his strength had once been considerable; nor was it at this time by any means annihilated. His hair was in considerable quantity, and was as white as the driven snow. His complexion was healthful and ruddy, at the same time that his face was furrowed with wrinkles. In his eye there was remarkable vivacity, and his whole countenance was strongly expressive of good nature: The boorishness of his rank in society was lost, in the cultivation his mind had derived from habits of sensibility and benevolence.

The view of his figure immediately introduced a train of ideas into my mind respecting the advantage to be drawn from the presence of such a person. The attempt to take any step without his consent was hopeless, for, though I should succeed with regard to him, he could easily give the alarm to other persons who would no doubt be within call. Add to which, I could scarcely have prevailed on myself to offer any offence to a person whose first appearance so strongly engaged my affection and esteem. In reality my thoughts were turned into a different channel. I was impressed with an ardent wish, to be able to call this man my benefactor. Pursued by a train of ill-fortune, I could

no longer consider myself as a member of society. I was a solitary being, cut off from the expectation of sympathy, kindness and the good-will of mankind. I was strongly impelled by the situation in which the present moment placed me, to indulge in a luxury which my destiny seemed to have denied. I could not conceive of the smallest comparison between the idea of deriving my liberty from the spontaneous kindness of a worthy and excellent mind, and that of being indebted for it to the selfishness and baseness of the worst members of society. It was thus that I allowed myself in the wantonness of refinement even in the midst of destruction.

Guided by these sentiments, I requested his attention to the circumstances by which I had been brought into my present situation. He immediately signified his assent, and said he would cheerfully listen to any thing I thought proper to communicate. I told him the persons who had just left me in charge with him, had come to this town for the purpose of apprehending some person who had been guilty of robbing the mail; that they had chosen to take me up under this warrant, and had conducted me before a justice of the peace; that they had soon detected their mistake, the person in question being an Irishman, and differing from me both in country and stature; but that by collusion between them and the justice they were permitted to retain me in custody, and pretended to undertake to conduct me to Warwick to confront me with my accomplice; that in searching me at the justice's they had found a sum of money in my possession which excited their cupidity, and that they had just been proposing to me to give me my liberty upon condition of my surrendering this sum into their hands. Under these circumstances I requested

quested him to consider whether he would wish to render himself the instrument of their extortion. I put myself into his hands, and solemnly averred the truth of the facts I had just stated. If he would assist me in my escape, it could have no other effect than to disappoint the base passions of my conductors. I would upon no account expose him to any real inconvenience; but I was well assured that the same generosity that prompted him to a good deed, would enable him effectually to vindicate it when done; and that those who detained me, when they had lost sight of their prey, would feel covered with confusion, and not dare to take another step in the affair.

The old man listened to what I related with curiosity and interest. He said that he had always felt an abhorrence to the sort of people who had me in their hands, that he had an aversion to the task they had just imposed upon him, but that he could not refuse some little disagreeable offices to oblige his daughter and son-in-law. He had no doubt, from my countenance and manner, of the truth of what I had asserted to him. It was an extraordinary request I had made, and he did not know what had induced me to think him the sort of person to whom it might properly be made. In reality however his habits of thinking were uncommon, and he felt more than half inclined to act as I desired. One thing at least he would desire of me in return, which was to be faithfully informed in some degree respecting the person he was asked to oblige. What was my name?

The question came upon me unprepared. But, whatever might be the consequences, I could not bear to deceive the person by whom it was put, and in the circumstances under which it was put.

The

The practice of perpetual falsehood is too painful a task. I replied that my name was Williams.

He paused. His eye was fixed upon me. I saw his complexion alter at the repetition of that word. He proceeded with visible anxiety.

My christian name?

Caleb.

Good God! it could not be ———? He conjured me by every thing that was sacred to answer him faithfully to one question more. I was not?—no, it was impossible—the person who had formerly lived servant with Mr. Falkland of ———?

I told him that, whatever might be the meaning of his question, I would answer him truly. I was the individual he mentioned.

As I uttered these words, the old man rose from his seat. He was sorry that fortune had been so unpropitious to him, as for him ever to have set eyes upon me! I was a monster with whom the very earth groaned!

I intreated that he would suffer me to explain this new misapprehension, as he had done in the former instance. I had no doubt that I should do it equally to his satisfaction.

No! no! no! he would upon no consideration admit that his ears should suffer such contamination. This case and the other were very different. There was no criminal upon the face of the earth, no murderer, half so detestable, as the person who could prevail upon himself to utter the charges I had done by way of recrimination against so generous a master.—The old man was in a perfect agony with the recollection.

At length he calmed himself enough to say he should never cease to grieve that he had held a moment's parley with me. He did not know what was the conduct that severe justice required of

him; but, since he had come into the knowledge of who I was only by my own confession, it was irreconcilably repugnant to his feelings to make use of that knowledge to my injury. Here therefore all relation between us ceased; and indeed it would be an abuse of words to consider me in the light of a human creature. He would do me no mischief; but then on the other hand he would not for the world be any way assisting and abetting me.

I was inexpressibly affected at the abhorrence this good and benevolent creature expressed against me. I could not be silent; I endeavoured once and again to prevail upon him to hear me. But his determination was unalterable. Our contest lasted for some time, and he at length terminated it by ringing the bell, and calling up the waiter. A very little while after this my conductors entered, and these two other persons withdrew.

It was a part of the singularity of my fate that it hurried me from one species of anxiety and distress to another, too rapidly to suffer any one of them to sink deeply into my mind. I am apt to believe in the retrospect that half the calamities I was destined to endure would infallibly have overwhelmed and destroyed me. But, as it was, I had no leisure to chew the cud upon cross accidents as they befel me, but was under the necessity of forgetting them to guard against peril that the next moment seemed ready to crush me. The behaviour of this incomparable and amiable old man cut me to the heart. It was a dreadful prognostic for all my future life. But, as I have just observed, my conductors entered, and another subject called imperiously upon my attention. I could have been content, mortified as I was at this instant, to have been shut up in some impenetrable solitude, and to have

have wrapped myself up in inconsolable misery. But the grief I endured had not such power over me, as that I could be content to risk the being led to the gallows. The love of life, and still more a hatred against oppression, steeled my heart against that species of inertia. In the scene that had just passed I had indulged, as I have said, in a wantonness and luxury of refinement. It was time that that indulgence should be brought to a period. It was dangerous to trifle any more upon the brink of fate; and, penetrated as I was with sadness by the result of my last attempt, I was little disposed to any unnecessary circumambulation. I was exactly in the temper in which the gentlemen who had me in their power, would have desired to find me. Accordingly we entered upon immediate business; and, after some chaffering, they agreed to accept eleven guineas as the price of my freedom. To preserve however the chariness of their reputation, they insisted upon conducting me with them for a few miles on the outside of a stage coach. They then pretended that the road they had to travel lay in a cross-country direction; and, having quitted the vehicle, they suffered me, almost as soon as it was out of sight, to shake off this troublesome association, and follow my own inclinations. It may be worth remarking by the way, that these fellows outwitted themselves at their own trade. They had laid hold of me at first under the idea of a prize of a hundred guineas: they had since been glad to accept a composition of eleven; but, if they had retained me a little longer in their possession, they would have found the possibility of acquiring the sum that had originally excited their pursuit, upon a different score.

The mischances that had befallen me in my late attempt to escape from my pursuers by having recourse to the sea, deterred me from the thought
of

of repeating the same experiment. I therefore once more returned to the suggestion of hiding myself, at least for the present, amidst the crowds of the metropolis. Meanwhile I by no means thought proper to venture by the direct route, and the less so as that was the course which would be steered by my late conductors; but took my road along the borders of Wales. The only incident worth relating in this place, occurred in a project I thought proper to adopt for crossing the Severn in a particular point. The mode of crossing was by a ferry; and by some strange inadvertence I lost my way so completely that I was wholly unable that night to reach the ferry, and arrive at the town which I had destined for my repose.

It was by a singular fatality that this petty disappointment, in the midst of the overwhelming considerations that might have been expected to engross every thought of my mind, was borne by me with particular impatience. I was that day uncommonly fatigued. Previously to the time when I mistook, or at least was aware of the mistake of the road, the sky had become exceedingly black and lowering, and soon after the clouds burst down in sheets of rain. I was then in the midst of a heath, without tree or covering of any sort to shelter me. I was thoroughly drenched in a moment. In this uncomfortable state I proceeded with a sort of sullen determination. By and by the rain gave place to a storm of hail. The hail-stones were large and frequent. I was ill defended from them by the miserable covering I wore, and they seemed to cut me in a thousand directions. The hail-storm subsided, and was again succeeded by a heavy rain. It was at this time I perceived that I had totally deviated from my way. I could discover neither man, nor beast, nor habitation of any kind.

kind. I walked on, consulting at every turn the path it would be proper for me to pursue, and in no instance able to discern a sufficient reason for rejecting the one and preferring the other. My mind was in a most disconsolate and repining state. I muttered imprecations and murmuring, as I passed along. I was full of loathing and abhorrence against life, and every thing that life carries in its train. After wandering without any certain direction for two hours, I was overtaken by the night, and obliged to take up my rest for the present in a solitary shed.

In a corner of the shed which I had chosen for my retreat I found some clean straw. I threw off my rags, placing them in a situation where they would best be dried, and buried myself amidst this friendly warmth. Through fatigue of mind and body it happened in this instance, though in general my repose was remarkably short, that I slept till almost noon of the next day. When I rose, I found that I was at no great distance from the ferry, which I crossed, and entered the town where I intended to have rested the preceding night.

It was market day. As I passed near the cross, I observed two people look at me with great earnestness, after which one of them exclaimed, I will be damned, if I do not think that is the very fellow those men were enquiring for, who set off an hour ago by the coach for ——. I was extremely alarmed at this information; and, quickening my pace, turned sharp down a narrow lane. The moment I was out of sight I ran with all the speed I could exert, and did not think myself safe till I was several miles distant from the place where this information had reached my ears. I have always
believed

believed that the men to whom it related were the very persons who had apprehended me on board the ship in which I had embarked for Ireland, that by some accident they had met with the description of my person as published on the part of Mr. Falkland, and that from putting together the circumstances they had been led to believe that this was the very individual who had lately been in their custody. Indeed it was a piece of infatuation in me for which I am now unable to account, that, after the various indications which had occurred in that affair proving to them that I was a man in very critical and peculiar circumstances, I should have persisted in wearing the same disguise without the smallest alteration. My escape in the present case was eminently fortunate. If I had not lost my way in consequence of the hail-storm of the preceding night, or if I had not so greatly overslept myself this very morning, I must almost infallibly have fallen into the hands of these infernal blood-hunters.

The town they had chosen for their next stage, the name of which I had thus caught in the market-place, was the very town to which, but for this intimation, I should have immediately proceeded. As it was, I determined to take a road as wide of it as possible. In the first place to which I came, in which it was practicable to do so, I bought a great coat which I drew over my beggar's weeds, and a better hat. The hat I slouched over my face, and covered one of my eyes with a green silk shade. The handkerchief, which I had hitherto worn about my head, I now tied about the lower part of my visage, so as to cover my mouth. By degrees I discarded every part of my former dress, and wore for my upper garment a kind of carman's frock, which

which, being of the better sort, made me look like the son of a reputable farmer of the lower class. Thus equipped, I proceeded on my journey, and, after a thousand alarms, precautions, and circuitous deviations from the direct path, arrived safely in London.

C H A P. XII.

HERE then was the termination of an immense series of labours, upon which no man could have looked back without astonishment, or forward without a sentiment bordering on despair. It was at a price which defies estimation that I had purchased this resting-place; whether we consider the efforts it had cost me to escape from the walls of my prison, or the dangers and anxieties to which I had been a prey from that hour to the present.

But why do I call the point at which I was now arrived a resting place? Alas, it was diametrically the reverse! It was my first and immediate business to review all the projects of disguise I had hitherto conceived, to derive every improvement I could invent from the practice to which I had been subjected, and to manufacture a veil of concealment more impenetrable than ever. This was an effort to which I could see no end. In ordinary cases the hue and cry after a supposed offender is a matter of temporary operation; but ordinary cases formed no standard for the colossal intelligence of Mr. Falkland. For the same reason, London, which appears an inexhaustible reservoir of concealment to the majority of mankind, brought no such consolatory sentiment to my mind. Whether life were worth my accepting on such terms I cannot pronounce. I only know that I persisted in this exertion of my faculties, through a sort of parental love that men are accustomed to entertain
for

for their intellectual offspring; the more thought I had expended in rearing it to its present perfection, the less did I find myself disposed to abandon it. Another motive not less strenuously exciting me to perseverance, was the ever-growing repugnance I felt to injustice and arbitrary power.

The first evening of my arrival in town I slept at an obscure inn at the borough of Southwark, choosing that side of the metropolis on account of its lying entirely wide of the part of England from which I came. I entered the inn in the evening in my countryman's frock; and, having paid for my lodging before I went to bed, equipped myself next morning as differently as my wardrobe would allow, and left the house before day. The frock I made up into a small packet; and, having carried it to a distance as great as I thought necessary, I dropped it in the corner of an alley through which I passed. My next care was to furnish myself with another suit of apparel totally different from any to which I had hitherto had recourse. The exterior which I was now induced to assume was that of a Jew. One of the gang of thieves upon ——— forest had been of that race; and, by the talent of mimicry, which I have already stated myself to possess, I could copy their pronunciation of the English language, sufficiently to answer such occasions as were likely to present themselves. One of the preliminaries I adopted was to repair to a quarter of the town in which great numbers of this people reside, and study their complexion and countenance. Having made such provision as my prudence suggested to me, I retired for that night to an inn on the side of Mile End and Wapping. Here I accoutred myself in my new habiliments; and, having employed the same precautions as before, retired from my lodging at a time least exposed to observation.

observation. It is unnecessary to describe all the particulars of my new equipage. Suffice it to say, that one of my cares was to discolour my complexion, and give it the dun and fallow hue which is in most instances characteristic of the tribe to which I assumed to belong; and that, when my metamorphosis was finished, I could not upon the strictest examination conceive, that any one could have traced out the person of Caleb Williams in this new disguise.

Thus far advanced in the execution of my project, I deemed it advisable to procure a lodging, and change my late wandering life for a stationary one. In this lodging I constantly secluded myself from the rising to the setting of the sun; the periods I allowed for exercise and air were few, and those few by night. I was even careful of so much as approaching the window of my apartment, though upon the attic story; a principle I laid down to myself was, not wantonly and unnecessarily to expose myself to risk, however slight that risk might appear. Thus I had seemingly attained a situation of obscurity, secluded from the haunts and intercourse of men. It had however little resemblance to that obscurity to which my imagination had looked forward with delight, while I was yet in—jail. There is an immeasurable difference between that rural solitude, where a man rests his head in the lap of verdure and tranquillity; and that retirement in the very seat of action, whose constant attendant is disquietude, and in which a man shrinks with alarm from the eye of his fellow.

I might have thought myself still more secure, if I had been in possession of money upon which to subsist. The necessity of a man's earning for himself the means of existence is in most instances a
merely

merely imaginary evil; but in mine certainly tended to thwart the plan of secrecy to which I was condemned. Whatever labour I adopted, or deemed myself qualified to discharge, it was first to be considered how I was to be provided with employment, and where I was to find an employer or purchaser for my commodities. In the mean time I had no alternative. The little money with which I had escaped from the blood-hunters was almost wholly expended.

After the minutest consideration I was able to bestow upon this question, I determined that literature should be the field of my first experiment. I had read much of money being acquired in this way, and of prices given by the speculators in this sort of ware to its proper manufacturers. My qualifications I estimated at a slender valuation. I was not without a conviction that experience and practice must pave the way to excellent production. But, though of these I was utterly destitute, my propensities had always led me in this direction; and my early thirst of knowledge had conducted me to a more intimate acquaintance with books, than could perhaps have been expected under my circumstances. If my literary pretensions were slight, the demand I intended to make upon them was not great. I only desired a subsistence, and I was persuaded few persons could subsist upon slenderer means than myself. I also considered that this was a temporary expedient, necessary only till by accident or time I could place myself in a more eligible situation. The reasons that principally determined me in my choice, were that this employment called upon me for the least preparation, and could, as I thought, be exercised with least observation.

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There was a solitary woman of middle age, who tenanted a chamber in this house upon the same floor with my own. I had no sooner determined upon the destination of my industry, than I cast my eye upon her as the possible instrument for disposing of my productions. Excluded as I was from all intercourse with my species in general, I found pleasure in the occasional exchange of a few words with this inoffensive and good-humoured creature, who was already of an age to preclude scandal. She lived upon a very small annuity allowed her by a distant relation, a woman of quality, who, possessed of thousands herself, had no other anxiety with respect to this person, than that she should not contaminate her alliance by the exertion of honest industry. This humble creature was of a uniformly chearful and active disposition, unacquainted alike with the cares of wealth, and the pressure of misfortune. Though her pretensions were small, and her information slender, she was by no means deficient in penetration. She saw the faults and follies of mankind with a judging eye; but her temper was of so mild and forgiving a cast, as would have induced most persons to believe that she perceived nothing of the matter. Her heart overflowed with the milk of kindness. She was sincere and ardent in her attachments, and never did she omit a service which she perceived herself able to render to a human being. I found her willing and alert to enter into the business I proposed to her. That I might anticipate occasions of suspicion, I frankly told her that, for reasons which I wished to be excused from relating, but which, if related, I was sure would not deprive me of her good opinion, I found it necessary for the present to keep myself private. With this statement she readily acquiesced, and told me that she

she had no desire for any farther information than I found it expedient to give.

My first productions were of the poetical kind. After having finished two or three, I directed this generous friend to take them to the office of a newspaper; but they were rejected with contempt by the Aristarchus of that place, who, having bestowed on them a superficial glance, told her that such matters were not at all in his way. I cannot help mentioning in this place that the countenance of Mrs. Marney (that was the name of my ambassador) was in all cases a perfect indication of her success, and rendered explanation by words wholly unnecessary. She interested herself so unreservedly in what she undertook, that she felt either miscarriage or good fortune much more exquisitely than I did. I had an unhesitating confidence in my own resources, and, occupied as I was in the meditation of more interesting concerns, regarded these matters as altogether trivial.

I quietly took the pieces back, and laid them upon my table. Upon revival I altered and transcribed one of them, and, joining it with two others, dispatched them together to the editor of a magazine. He desired they might be left with him till the day after to-morrow. When that day came, he told my friend they should be inserted; but, Mrs. Marney asking respecting the price, he replied, it was their constant rule to give nothing for poetical compositions, the letter-box being always full of writings of that sort; but, if the gentleman would try his hand in prose, a short essay or a tale, he would see what he could do for him.

With the requisition of my literary dictator I immediately complied. I attempted a paper in the style of Addison's Spectators, which was accepted.

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In a short time I was upon an established footing in this quarter. I however distrusted my resources in the way of moral disquisition, and soon turned my thoughts to his other suggestion, a tale. His demands upon me were now frequent, and to facilitate my labour I bethought myself of the resource of translation. I had scarcely any convenience with respect to the procuring of books; but, as my memory was very retentive, I frequently translated or modelled my narratives upon a reading of some years before. By a fatality for which I do not well know how to account, my thoughts frequently led me to the histories of celebrated robbers; and I retailed from time to time incidents and anecdotes of Cartouche, Gusman d'Alfarache, and other memorable worthies, whose career was terminated upon the gallows or the scaffold.

CHAP.

C H A P. XIII.

WHILE I was thus endeavouring to occupy and provide for the intermediate period till the violence of the pursuit after me might be a little abated, a new source of danger opened upon me of which I had no previous suspicion. Jones, the thief who had been expelled from captain Raymond's gang, had fluctuated during the last years of his life, between the two professions of a violator and a minister of executive justice. I believe he had originally devoted himself to the first, and probably his initiation in the mysteries of thieving qualified him to be peculiarly expert in the profession of a thief-taker, a profession he had adopted not from choice, but necessity. In this employment his reputation was great, though perhaps not equal to his merits; for it happens here, as in all other departments of human society, that, however the subalterns may furnish wisdom and skill, the principals run away with the eclat. He was exercising this art in a very prosperous manner, when it happened by some accident, that one or two of his achievements, previous to his having shaken off the dregs of unlicensed depredation, were in danger of becoming subjects of public attention. Having had repeated intimations of this, he thought it prudent to decamp, and it was during this period of his retreat that he entered into the—gang.

Such was the history of this man antecedently to his being placed in the situation in which I had first encountered him. At the time of that encounter

counter he was a veteran of Captain Raymond's gang; for, thieves being a short-lived race, the character of veteran costs the less time in acquiring. Upon his expulsion from this community he returned once more to his lawful profession, and by his old comrades was received with congratulation as a lost sheep. In the vulgar classes of society no length of time is sufficient to expiate a crime; but among the fraternity of thief-takers it is a rule never to bring one of their own brethren to a reckoning, when it can with any propriety be avoided. Another rule observed by those who have passed through the same gradations as Jones had done, and which was adopted by Jones himself, was always to reserve such as had been the accomplices of their depredations to the last, and on no account to assail them without great necessity or powerful temptation. For this reason Captain Raymond and his confederates were, according to Jones's system of tactics, safe, as he would have termed it, from his retaliation.

But, though Jones was in this sense of the term a man of strict honour, my case unfortunately did not fall within the laws of honour he acknowledged. Misfortune had overtaken me, and I was on all sides without protection or shelter. The persecution to which I was exposed was founded upon the supposition of my having committed felony to an immense amount. But in this Jones had had no participation; he was careless whether the supposition were true or false, and hated me as much as if my innocence had been established beyond the reach of so much as a whisper of suspicion. The blood-hunters who had taken me into custody at —, related, as usual, among their fraternity a part of their adventure, and told of the reason which inclined them to suppose, that the

the individual who had passed through their custody, was the very Caleb Williams for whose apprehension a reward had been offered of a hundred guineas. Jones, whose acuteness was eminent in the way of his profession, by comparing facts and dates was induced to suspect in his own mind that Caleb Williams was the person he had hustled and wounded upon —— forest. Against that person he entertained the bitterest aversion. I had been the innocent occasion of his being expelled with disgrace from Captain Raymond's gang; and Jones, as I afterwards understood, was intimately persuaded that there was no comparison between the liberal and manly profession of a robber, from which I had driven him, and the sordid and mechanical occupation of a blood-hunter, to which he was obliged to return. He no sooner received the information I have mentioned, than he vowed revenge. He determined to leave all other objects, and consecrate every faculty of his mind to the unkenneling me from my hiding place. The offered reward, which his vanity made him consider as assuredly his own, appeared as the complete indemnification of his labour and expence. Thus I had to encounter the sagacity he possessed in the way of his profession, whetted and stimulated by a sentiment of vengeance in a mind that knew no restraint from conscience or humanity.

The first step he pursued in execution of his project, was to set out for the sea-port town where I had formerly been apprehended. From thence he traced me to the banks of the Severn, and from the banks of the Severn to London. It is scarcely necessary to observe that this is always practicable, unless the precautions of the fugitive be in the highest degree both judicious in the conception and fortunate in the execution,—provided the pur-

fuer have motives strong enough to excite him to perseverance. Jones indeed in the course of his pursuit was often obliged to double his steps; and, like the harrier, an apt emblem of a man engaged in this sanguinary occupation, whenever he was at a fault, returned to the place where he had last perceived the scent of the animal whose death he had decreed. He spared neither pains nor time in the gratification of the passion which choice had made his ruling one.

Upon my arrival in town he for a moment lost all trace of me, London being a place in which, on account of the magnitude of its dimensions, it might well be supposed that an individual could remain hidden and unknown. But no difficulty could discourage this new adversary. He went from inn to inn, reasonably supposing that there was no private house to which I could immediately repair, till he found, by the description he gave, and the sentiments he excited, that I had slept for one night in the borough of Southwark. But he could get no farther information. The people of the inn had no knowledge what had become of me the next morning. This however did but render him more eager in his pursuit. The describing me was now more difficult, on account of the partial change of my dress I had made the second day of my being in town. But Jones at length overcame the obstacle from that quarter. Having traced me to my second inn, he was here furnished with a more copious information. I had been a subject of speculation for the leisure hours of some of the persons belonging to this inn. An old woman of a most curious and loquacious disposition who lived opposite to it, and who that morning rose early to her washing, had espied me from her window by the light of a large lamp which hung over the inn,

inn, as I issued from the gate. She had but a very imperfect view of me, but she thought there was something Jewish in my appearance. She was accustomed to hold a conference every morning with the landlady of the inn, some of the waiters and chambermaids occasionally assisting at it. In the course of the dialogue of this morning she asked some questions about the Jew who had slept there the night before. No Jew had slept there. The curiosity of the landlady was excited in her turn. By the time of the morning it could be no one but me. It was very strange! They compared notes respecting my appearance and dress. No two things could be more dissimilar. The Jew-Christian, upon any dearth of subjects of intelligence, repeatedly furnished matter for their discourse.

The information thus afforded to Jones, appeared exceedingly material. But the performance did not for some time keep pace with the promise. He could not enter every private house into which lodgers were ever admitted, in the same manner that he had treated the inns. He walked the streets, and examined with a curious and inquisitive eye the countenance of every Jew about my stature; but in vain. He repaired to Duke's Place and the synagogues. It was not here that in reality he could calculate upon finding me; but he resorted to these means in despair and as a last hope. He was more than once upon the point of giving up the pursuit; but he was recalled to it by an insatiable and restless appetite for revenge.

It was during this perturbed and fluctuating state of his mind that he chanced to pay a visit to a brother of his who was the head-workman of a printing-office. There was little intercourse between these two persons, their dispositions and habits of life being extremely dissimilar. The printer

ter was industrious, sober, and of a propensity to accumulation. He was extremely dissatisfied with the character and pursuits of his brother, and had made some ineffectual attempts to reclaim him. But, though they by no means agreed in their habits of thinking, they sometimes saw each other. Jones loved to boast of as many of his achievements as he dared venture to mention; and his brother was one more hearer, in addition to the set of his usual associates. The printer was amused, with the blunt sagacity of remark and novelty of incident that characterised Jones's conversation. He was secretly pleased, in spite of all his sober and church-going prejudices, that he was brother to a man of so much ingenuity and fortitude.

After having listened for some time upon this occasion to the wonderful stories which Jones in his rugged way condescended to tell, the printer felt an ambition to entertain his brother in his turn. He began to retail some of my stories of Cartouche and Gusman d'Alfarache. The attention of Jones was excited. His first emotion was wonder; his second was envy and aversion. Where did the printer get these stories? This question was answered. I will tell you what, said the printer, we none of us know what to make of the writer of these articles. He writes poetry and morality and history: I am a printer and corrector of the press, and may pretend without vanity to be a tolerably good judge of these matters: he writes them all to my mind extremely fine, and yet he is no more than a Jew. [To my honest printer this seemed as strange as if they had been written by a Cherokee chieftain at the falls of the Mississippi.]

A Jew! How do you know? Did you ever see him?

No;

No; the matter is always brought to us by a woman. But my master hates all mysteries; he likes to see his authors themselves. So he plagues and plagues the old woman; but he can never get any thing out of her, except that one day she happened to drop that the young gentleman was a Jew.

A Jew! a young gentleman! a person who did every thing by proxy, and made a secret of all his motions! Here was abundant matter for the speculations and suspicions of Jones. He was confirmed in them, without adverting to the process of his own mind, by the subject of my lucubrations, men who died by the hands of the executioner. He said little more to his brother, except asking, as if casually, what sort of an old woman this was? of what age she might be? and whether she often brought him materials of this kind? and soon after took occasion to leave him.

It was with vast pleasure that Jones had listened to this unhopd for information. Having collected from his brother sufficient hints relative to the person and appearance of Mrs. Marney, and understanding that he expected to receive something from me the next day, Jones took his stand in the street early that he might not risk miscarriage by negligence. He waited several hours, but not without success. Mrs. Marney came; he watched her into the house; and after about twenty minutes delay saw her return. He dogged her from street to street; observed her finally enter the door of a private house; and congratulated himself upon having at length arrived at the consummation of his labours.

The house she entered was not her own habitation. By a sort of miraculous accident she had observed

observed Jones following her in the street. As she went home, she saw a woman who had fallen down in a fainting fit. Moved by the compassion that was ever alive in her, she approached her in order to render her assistance. Presently a crowd collected round them. Mrs. Marney having done what she was able, once more proceeded homewards. Observing the crowd round her, the idea of pickpockets occurred to her mind; she put her hands to her sides, and at the same time looked round upon the populace. She had left the circle somewhat abruptly; and Jones, who had been obliged to come nearer lest he should lose her in the confusion, was at that moment standing exactly opposite to her. His visage was of the most extraordinary kind; habit had written the characters of malignant cunning and dauntless effrontery in every line of his face; and Mrs. Marney, who was neither philosopher nor physiognomist, was nevertheless struck. This good woman, like most persons of her notable character, had a peculiar way of going home, not through the open streets, but by narrow lanes and alleys, with intricate insertions and sudden turnings. In one of these by some accident she once again caught a glance of her pursuer. This circumstance, together with the singularity of his appearance, awakened her conjectures. Could he be following her? It was the middle of the day, and she could have no fears for herself. But could this circumstance have any reference to me? She recollected the precautions and secrecy I practised, and had no doubt that I had reasons for what I did. She recollected that she had always been upon her guard respecting me; but had she been sufficiently so? She thought that, if she should be the means of
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any mischief to me, she should be miserable for ever. She determined therefore by way of precaution in case of the worst, to call at a friend's house, and send me word of what had occurred. Having instructed her friend, she went out immediately upon a visit to a person in the exactly opposite direction, and desired her friend to proceed upon the errand to me, five minutes after she left the house. By this prudence she completely extricated me from the present danger.

Meantime the intelligence that was brought me by no means ascertained the greatness of the danger. For any thing I could discover in it, the circumstance might be perfectly innocent, and the fear solely proceed from the over caution and kindness of this benevolent and excellent woman. Yet such was the misery of my situation, that I had no choice. For this menace or no menace, I was obliged to desert my habitation at a minute's warning, taking with me nothing but what I could carry in my hand; to see my generous benefactress no more; to quit my little arrangements and provision; and to seek once again in some forlorn retreat new projects and, if of that I could have any rational hope, a new friend: I descended into the street with a heavy, not an irresolute heart. It was broad day. I said, Persons are at this moment supposed to be roaming the street in search of me: I must not trust to the chance of their pursuing one direction, and I another. I traversed half a dozen streets, and then dropped into an obscure house of entertainment for persons of small expence. In this house I took some refreshment, passed several hours of active, but melancholy thinking, and at last procured a bed. As soon however as it was dark, I went out (for this

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was indispensable) to purchase the materials of a new disguise. Having adjusted it as well as I could during the night, I left this asylum with the same precautions that I had employed in former instances.

C H A P. XIV.

I PROCURED a new lodging. I became more cautious, and went out seldomer than ever. By some bias of the mind it may be, gratifying itself with images of peril, I inclined upon the whole to believe that Mrs. Marney's alarm had not been without foundation. I was however unable to conjecture through what means danger had approached me; and had therefore only the unsatisfactory remedy of redoubling my watch upon all my actions. Still I had the joint considerations pressing upon me of security and subsistence. I had some small remains of the produce of my former industry; but this was but small, for my employer was in arrear with me, and I did not choose in any method to apply to him for payment. The anxieties of my mind in spite of all my struggles preyed upon my health. I did not consider myself as in safety for an instant. My appearance was wasted to a shadow; and I started at every sound that was unexpected. Sometimes I was half tempted to resign myself into the hands of the law, and brave its worst; but resentment and indignation at those times speedily flowed back upon my mind, and re-animated my perseverance.

I knew no better resource with respect to subsistence, than that I had employed in the former instance, of seeking some third person to stand between me and the disposal of my industry. I might find an individual ready to undertake this office in my behalf, but where should I find the

benevolent soul of Mrs. Marney? The person I fixed upon was a Mr. Spurrel, a man who took in work from the watch-makers, and had an apartment upon our second floor. I examined him two or three times with irresolute glances, as we passed upon the stairs, before I would venture to accost him. He observed this, and at length kindly invited me into his apartment.

Being seated, he condoled with me upon my seeming bad health, and the solitary mode of my living, and wished to know whether he could be of any service to me. From the first moment he saw me, he had conceived an affection for me. In my present disguise I appeared twisted and deformed, and in other respects by no means an object of attraction. But it seemed, Mr. Spurrel had lost an only son about six months before, and I was the very picture of him. If I had put off my counterfeited ugliness, I should probably have lost all hold upon his affections. He was now an old man, as he observed, just dropping into the grave, and this son had been his only consolation. The poor lad was always ailing, but he had been a nurse to him; and the more care he required while he was alive, the more he missed him now he was dead. Now he had not a friend, nor any body that cared for him in the whole world. If I pleased, I should be instead of that son to him, and he would treat me in all respects with the same attention and care.

I expressed my sense of these benevolent offers; but told him that I should be sorry to be in any way burthensome to him. My ideas at present led me to a private and solitary life, and my chief difficulty was to reconcile this with some mode of earning necessary subsistence. If he would condescend to lend me his assistance in smoothing this difficulty,

difficulty, it would be the greatest benefit he could confer on me. I told him that my mind had always had a mechanical and industrious turn, and that I did not doubt of soon mastering any craft to which I seriously applied myself. I had not been brought up to any trade; but, if he would favour me with his instructions, I would work with him as long as he pleased for a bare subsistence. I knew that I was asking of him an extraordinary kindness, but I was urged on the one hand by extreme and unmitigable necessity, and encouraged on the other by the persuasiveness of his friendly professions.

The old man dropped some tears over my apparent distress, and readily consented to every thing I proposed. Our agreement was soon made, and I entered upon my functions accordingly. My new friend was a man of a singular turn of mind. Love of money and a charitable officiousness of demeanour were his leading characteristics. He lived in the most penurious manner, and denied himself almost every indulgence. I entitled myself almost immediately, as he frankly acknowledged, to some remuneration for my labours, and accordingly he insisted upon my being paid. He did not however, as some persons would have done under the circumstances I have described, pay me the whole amount of my earnings, but professed to subtract from them twenty per cent. as an equitable consideration for instruction and commission-money in procuring me a channel for my industry. Yet he frequently shed tears over me, was uneasy in every moment of our indispensable separation, and exhibited perpetual tokens of attachment and fondness.

I had not been long in this new situation, before an incident occurred which filled me with
greater

greater alarm and apprehension than ever. I was walking out one evening for an hour's exercise and air, an indulgence in which I now scarcely ever allowed myself, when my ear was struck with two or three casual sounds from the mouth of a hawker who was bawling his wares. I stood still to inform myself more exactly, when to my utter astonishment and confusion I heard him deliver himself nearly in these words. "Here you have the Most Wonderful and Surprising History, and Miraculous Adventures of Caleb Williams! you are informed how he first robbed, and then brought false accusations against his master; as also of his attempting divers times to break out of prison, till at last he effected his escape in the most wonderful and uncredible manner; as also of his travelling the kingdom in various disguises, and the robberies he committed with a most desperate and daring gang of thieves; and of his coming up to London, where it is supposed he now lies concealed; with a true and faithful copy of the hue and cry printed and published by one of his majesty's most principal secretaries of state, offering a reward of one hundred guineas for apprehending him. All for the price of one halfpenny."

Petrified as I was at these amazing and dreadful sounds, I had the temerity to go up to the man and purchase one of his papers, desperately resolved to know the exact state of the fact, and what I had to depend upon. I carried it with me a little way, till, no longer able to endure my impatience, I contrived to make out the chief part of its contents by the help of a lamp, at the upper end of a narrow passage. I found it contain a greater number of circumstances than could have been expected in this species of publication. I was equalled to the most notorious house-breaker in the art
of

of penetrating through walls and doors, and to the most accomplished swindler in plausibleness, duplicity and disguise. The hand-bill which Wilson had first brought to us upon the forest, was printed at length. All my disguises, previously to the last alarm that had been given me by the providence of Mrs. Marney, were faithfully enumerated; and the public was warned to be upon their watch against a person of an uncouth and extraordinary appearance, and who lived in a recluse and solitary manner. I also learned from this paper that my former lodgings had been searched on the very evening of my escape, and that Mrs. Marney had been sent to Newgate upon a charge of misprision of felony.—This last circumstance affected me deeply: It was a most cruel and intolerable idea, if I were not only myself to be an object of unrelenting persecution, but my very touch were to be infectious, and every one that succoured me to be involved in the common ruin. I could almost have consented to undergo the utmost malice of my enemies, could I by that means have saved this excellent woman from an hour's distress.—I afterwards learned that Mrs. Marney was delivered from confinement by the interposition of her noble relation.

This paper was the consummation of my misfortune. Nothing could happen beyond it but the actual apprehension with which I was menaced. Disguise was no longer of use to me. A numerous class of individuals, through every department, almost every house of the metropolis, would be induced to look with a suspicious eye upon every stranger, especially every solitary stranger, that fell under their observation. The prize of one hundred guineas was held out to excite their cupidity, and sharpen their penetration. It was no longer Bow-Street, it was a million of men, in
arms.

arms against me. Neither had I the refuge, which few men have been so miserable as to want, of one single individual with whom to repose my alarms, and who might shelter me from the gaze of indiscriminate curiosity. I instantly saw that London was no place for my abode, at the same time that I apprehended increase of peril in any attempt to withdraw from it. I resolved however that I would no longer submit to this state of terrific alarm. I resolved that I would not remain quiescent, till mischief should overtake and devour me. I could scarcely reduce things to a more miserable pass. "To be worse than this, were not to be at all."

Filled with reflections of this nature, I carefully and deliberately destroyed the paper I had been reading, by tearing it in a thousand pieces. I did not return home, but went instantly to the water-side. I found that the cheapest passage I could procure was in a vessel, moored near the Tower, and which was to sail in a few days for Middleburg in Holland. I would have gone instantly on board and endeavoured to prevail with the captain to let me remain there till he sailed; but that unfortunately I had not money enough in my pocket to defray my passage. It was worse than this. I had not money enough in the world. I however paid the captain half his demand, and promised to return with the rest. I knew not in what manner it was to be procured, but I believed that I would not fail to procure it. I had some idea of borrowing it of Mr. Spurrel. Surely he would not refuse me? He appeared to love me with parental affection, and I thought I might trust myself for a moment in his hands.

I approached my own home with a heavy and foreboding heart. Mr. Spurrel was not at home; and I was obliged to wait for his return. I had
work

work of his in my trunk, which had been delivered out to me that very morning, to five times the amount I wanted. I even canvassed for a moment whether I should make use of this property as if it were my own; but I rejected the idea with disdain. I had never in the smallest degree merited the reproaches that were cast upon me; and I was determined I never would merit them. It was extraordinary that Mr. Spurrel should be abroad at this hour; I had never known it happen before. His bed-time was between nine and ten. Ten o'clock came, eleven o'clock, but not Mr. Spurrel. At midnight I heard his knock at the door. Every soul in the house was in bed. Mr. Spurrel, on account of his regular hours, was unprovided with a key to open for himself. A gleam of gaiety and the social spirit came over my heart. I flew nimbly down the stairs, and opened the door to him myself.

I could perceive by the little taper in my hand something extraordinary written in his countenance. I had not time to speak, before I saw two other men follow him. At the first glance I was sufficiently assured what sort of persons they were. At the second I perceived that one of them was no other than Jones himself. I had understood formerly that he had been of this profession, and I was not much surprised to find him in it again. Though I had for some hours made up my mind as it were, to the unavoidable necessity of my once more falling into the hands of the officers of law, yet I could not see them enter without feeling my very heart ache in my bosom. I was beside not a little surprised at the time and manner of their entrance, and desirous to learn whether Mr. Spurrel could be base enough to have been their introducer.

I was

I was not long held in perplexity. He no sooner saw his two followers properly within the door, than he exclaimed with convulsive eagerness, There, there, that is your man! thank God! thank God! Jones looked eagerly in my face, with a countenance expressive alternately of hope and doubt, and answered, By G—, and I do not know whether it be or no! I am afraid we are in the wrong box! then recollecting himself, We will go into the house, and examine farther however. We all went up stairs into Mr. Spurrel's room; I set down the candle upon the table. I had hitherto been silent; but now, with a calm and deliberate manner, in my feigned voice, one of the characteristics of which was lisping, I asked, And pray, gentlemen, what may be your pleasure with me? Why, said Jones, our errand is with one Caleb Williams, and a precious rascal he is! I ought to know the chap well enough; but they say he has as many faces as there are days in the year. So you please to pull off your face; or if you cannot do that, at least you can put off your clothes, and let us see what your hump is made of.

I remonstrated, but in vain. I stood detected in part of my artifice; and Jones, though still uncertain, was every moment more and more confirmed in his suspicions. Mr. Spurrel perfectly gloted, with eyes that seemed ready to devour every thing that passed. As my imposture gradually appeared more palpable, he repeated his exclamation, Thank God! thank God! At last, tired with this scene of mummery, and disgusted beyond measure with the base and hypocritical figure I seemed to exhibit, I exclaimed, Well, I am Caleb Williams; conduct me wherever you please! And now, Mr. Spurrel——! He gave a violent start. The instant I declared myself his transport had been
been

been at the highest, and was, to any power he was able to exert, absolutely uncontrollable. But the unexpectedness of my address, and the tone in which I spoke, electrified him.—Is it possible, continued I, that you should have been the wretch to betray me? What had I done to deserve this treatment? Is this the kindness you professed? the affection that was perpetually in your mouth? to be the death of me!

My poor boy! my dear creature! cried Spurrel, whimpering, and in a tone of the humblest expostulation, indeed I could not help it! I would have helped it, if I could! I hope they will not hurt my darling! I am sure, I shall die if they do!

Miserable driveller! interrupted I, with a stern voice, do you betray me into the gore-dripping fangs of the law, and then talk of my not being hurt? I know my sentence, and am prepared to meet it! You have fixed the halter upon my neck, and at the same price would have done so to your only son! Go, count your accursed guineas! My life would have been safer in the hands of one I had never seen, than in yours, whose mouth and whose eyes for ever ran over with crocodile affection!

CHAP. XV.

SAYING this, I left him with ineffable contempt, unable to utter a word. Jones and his companion attended me. It is unnecessary to repeat all the insolence of this man. He alternately triumphed in the completion of his revenge, and regretted the loss of the reward to the shrivelled old curmudgeon we had just quitted, whom however he swore he would cheat of it, if he could. He equally regretted the imperfect way in which his skill had been cut off; boastfully recounting how he had ferreted me thus far, and bitterly lamenting that the whole had not been left to him, which in a day or two he would infallibly have accomplished.

I paid but little attention to his story. It struck upon my sense, and I was able to recollect it at my nearest leisure, though I thought not of it at the time. For the present I was busily employed reflecting on my new situation, and the conduct to be observed in it. My prospects were particularly gloomy and discouraging. How much labour had I exerted, first to extricate myself from prison, and next to evade the diligence of my pursuers; and the result of all, after months of anxiety and diligence, was, to be brought back to the point from which I began! I had gained fame indeed, the miserable fame to have my story bawled forth by hawkers and ballad-mongers, to have my praises as an active and surprising villain celebrated among
footmen

footmen and chambermaids ; but I was neither an Erostratus nor an Alexander, to die contented with that species of eulogium. With respect to all that was solid and desirable, what chance could I ascribe to new exertions of a similar nature ; which, if undertaken at all, must be undertaken with infinitely more unfavourable auspices ?

They were considerations like these that dictated my resolution. My mind had been gradually weaning from Mr. Falkland, till its feelings rose to something like abhorrence. I had long cherished a reverence for him, which not even animosity and persecution on his part could readily destroy. But I now ascribed a character so inhumanly sanguinary to his mind ; I saw something so fiend-like in the thus hunting me round the world, and determining to be satisfied with nothing less than my blood, while at the same time he knew my innocence, my innoxiousness, nay I might add my virtues ; that henceforth I trampled reverence and the recollection of former esteem under my feet. I lost all regard to his intellectual greatness, and all pity for the torture and agonies of his soul. I also would abjure forbearance. I would show myself bitter and inflexible as he had done. Was it wise in him to compel me into extremity and madness ? Had he no fears for his own secret and atrocious offences ?

I went before the magistrates to whose office Jones and his comrade conducted me, fully determined to publish those astonishing secrets, of which I had hitherto been the faithful depository ; and once for all to turn the tables upon my accuser. It was time that the real criminal should be the sufferer, and not that innocence should for ever labour under the oppression of guilt. I had been obliged to spend the remainder of the night upon which I
had

had been apprehended in prison. During the interval I had thrown off every vestige of disguise, and appeared the next morning in my own person. I was of course easily identified; and, this being the whole with which the magistrates before whom I now stood thought themselves concerned, they were proceeding to make out an order for my being conducted back to my own county. I suspended the dispatch of this measure by observing that I had something to disclose. This is an overture to which men appointed for the administration of criminal justice never fail to attend.

I said that I had always protested my innocence, and must now repeat the protest.

In that case, retorted the senior magistrate abruptly, what can you have to disclose? If you are innocent, that is no business of ours! We act officially.

I always declared, continued I, that I was the perpetrator of no guilt, but that the guilt wholly belonged to my accuser. He privately conveyed these effects among my property, and then charged me with the robbery. I now declare more than that, that this man is a **MURDERER**, that I detected his criminality, and that for that reason he is determined to deprive me of life. I presume, gentlemen, that you do consider it as your business to take this declaration. I am persuaded you will be by no means disposed actively or passively to contribute to the atrocious injustice under which I suffer, to the imprisonment and condemnation of an innocent man in order that a murderer may go free. I suppressed this story as long as I could. I was extremely averse to be the author of the unhappiness or the death of a human being. But all patience and submission have their limits.

Give

Give me leave, sir, rejoined the magistrate with an air of affected moderation, to ask you two questions. Were you any way aiding, abetting, or contributing to this murder?

No.

And pray, sir, who is this Mr. Falkland, and what may have been the nature of your connection with him?

Mr. Falkland is a gentleman of six thousand per annum. I lived with him as his secretary.

In other words you were his servant?

As you please.

Very well, sir, that is quite enough for me. First I have to tell you as a magistrate, that I can have nothing to do with your declaration. If you had been concerned in the murder you talk of, that would alter the case. But it is out of all reasonable rule for a magistrate to take an information from a felon, except against his accomplices. Next I think it right to observe to you in my own proper person, that you appear to me to be the most impudent rascal I ever saw. Why, are you such an ass as to suppose, that the sort of story you have been telling, can be of any service to you, either here, or at the assizes, or any where else? A fine time of it indeed it would be, if, when gentlemen of six thousand a year take up their servants for robbing them, those servants could trump up such accusations as these, and could get any magistrate or court of justice to listen to them! Whether or no the felony with which you stand charged would have brought you to the gallows, I will not pretend to say. But I am sure this story will. There would be a speedy end to all order and good government, if fellows that trample upon ranks and distinctions in this atrocious sort, were upon any consideration suffered to get off.

And

And do you refuse, sir, to attend to the particulars of the charge I alledge?

Yes, sir, I do.—But, if I did not, pray what witnesses have you of the murder?

This question staggered me.

None.—But I believe I can make out a circumstantial proof of a nature to force attention from the most indifferent hearer.

I thought so.—Officers, take him from the bar.

Such was the success of this ultimate resort on my part, upon which I had built with such undoubting confidence. Till now I had conceived that the unfavourable situation in which I was placed was prolonged by my own forbearance; and I was determined to endure all that human nature could support, rather than have recourse to this extreme recrimination. That idea secretly consoled me under all my calamities: a voluntary sacrifice is cheerfully made. I regarded myself as allied to the army of martyrs and confessors; I applauded my own fortitude and self-denial; and I pleased myself with the idea, that I had the power, though I hoped never to employ it, by an unrelenting display of all my resources to put an end at once to my sufferings and persecutions.

And this at last was the justice of mankind. A man under certain circumstances shall not be heard in the detection of a crime, because he has not been a participator of it! The story of a flagitious murder shall be listened to with indifference, while an innocent man is hunted like a wild beast to the farthest corners of the earth! Six thousand a year shall protect a man from accusation; and the validity of an impeachment shall be superseded, because the author of it is a servant!

I was

I was conducted back to the very prison from which a few months before I had made my escape. My prospects were more gloomy, and my situation apparently more irremediable than ever. I was exposed again, if that were of any account, to the insolence and tyranny that are uniformly exercised within those walls. Why should I repeat the loathsome tale of all that was endured by me, and is endured by every man who is unhappy enough to fall under the government of these consecrated ministers of national jurisprudence? The sufferings I had already experienced, my anxieties, my flight, the perpetual expectation of being discovered, worse than the discovery itself, would perhaps have been enough to satisfy the most insensible individual in the court of his own conscience, if I had even been the felon I was pretended to be. But the law has neither eyes, nor ears, nor bowels of humanity; and it turns into marble the hearts of all those that are nursed in its principles.

Yet I was not cast down. I resolved that, while I had life, I would never despair. Oppressed, annihilated I might be; but if I died, I would die resisting. What use, what advantage, what pleasurable sentiment could arise from a tame surrender? There is no man that is ignorant, that to humble yourself at the feet of the law is a bootless task; in her courts there is no room for amendment and reformation.

My fortitude may to some persons appear above the standard of human nature. But, if I draw back the veil from my heart, they will readily confess their mistake. My heart bled at every pore. My resolution was not the calm sentiment of philosophy and reason. It was a gloomy and desperate purpose; the creature, not of hope, but of a mind austere held to its design, that thought itself satisfied

tified with the naked effort, and prepared to give success or miscarriage to the winds. It was to this miserable condition, which might awaken sympathy in the most hardened bosom, that Mr. Falkland had reduced me.

I anticipated the event of my trial. I was determined once more to escape from my prison, nor did I doubt of my ability to effect at least this first step towards my future preservation. The assizes, however, were near, and there were certain considerations, unnecessary to be detailed, that persuaded me there might be benefit in waiting till my trial should actually be terminated, before I made my attempt. It stood upon the list as one of the latest to be brought forward. I was therefore extremely surprised to find it called out of its order early on the morning of the second day. But, if this were unexpected, how much greater was my astonishment, when my prosecutor was called, to find neither Mr. Falkland nor Mr. Forester, nor a single individual of any description appear against me! The recognizances into which my prosecutors had entered were ordered to be forfeited, and I was dismissed without further impediment from the bar.

The effect which this incredible reverse produced upon my mind was as if I had fallen from the elevation of the most distant planet in the system upon our earth in a moment. I, who had come to that bar with the sentence of death already in idea ringing in my ears, to be told that I was free to transport myself whithersoever I pleased! Was it for this that I had broken through so many locks, and bolts, and the adamantine walls of my prison; that I had passed so many anxious days, and sleepless, spectre-haunted nights; that I had racked my invention for expedients of evasion and concealment; that
my

my mind had been roused to an energy of which I could scarcely have believed it capable; that my existence had been enthralled to an ever-living torment such as I could hardly have supposed it in man to endure? Great God! what is man? Is he thus blind to the future, thus totally unsuspecting of what is to occur in the next moment of his existence? I have somewhere read that heaven in mercy hides from us the future incidents of our life. My own experience does not well accord with this assertion. In this instance at least I should have been saved from insupportable labour and undescrivable anguish, could I have foreseen the catastrophe of this most interesting transaction.

CHAP.

C H A P. XVI.

IT was not long before I took my everlasting leave of this detested and miserable scene. My heart was for the present too full of astonishment and exultation in this unexpected deliverance, to admit of anxiety about the future. I withdrew from the town. I rambled with a slow and thoughtful pace, now bursting with exclamation, and now buried in profound and undefinable reverie. Accident led me towards the very heath which had first sheltered me, when upon a former occasion I broke out of my prison. I wandered among its cavities and its vallies. It was a forlorn and desolate solitude. I continued here I know not how long. Night at length overtook me unperceived, and I prepared to return for the present to the town I had quitted.

It was now perfectly dark, when two men whom I had not previously observed sprung upon me from behind. They seized me by the arms, and threw me upon the ground. I had no time for resistance or recollection. I could however perceive that one of them was the diabolical Jones. They blindfolded, gagged me, and hurried me I knew not whither. As we passed along in silence, I endeavoured to conjecture what could be the meaning of this extraordinary violence: I was strongly impressed with the idea that, after the event of this morning, the most severe and painful part of my history was past; nor could I persuade myself to shrink with alarm at this unexpected attack. It
might

might however be some new project suggested by the brutal unrelenting temper and animosity of Jones.

I presently found that we were returned into the town I had just quitted. They led me into a house, and, as soon as they had taken possession of a room, freed me from the restraints they had before imposed. Here Jones informed me with a malicious grin, that no harm was intended me, and therefore I should show most sense in keeping myself quiet. I perceived that we were in an inn; I overheard company in a room at no great distance from us, and therefore was myself as thoroughly aware as he could be, that there was at present little reason to stand in fear of any species of violence, and that it would be time enough to resist, when they attempted to conduct me from the inn in the same manner that they had brought me into it. I was not without some curiosity to see the conclusion that was to follow upon so extraordinary a commencement.

The preliminaries I have described were scarcely completed, before Mr. Falkland entered the room. I remember Collins, when he first communicated to me the particulars of our patron's history, observed that he was totally unlike the man he had once been. I had no means of ascertaining the truth of that observation. But it was strikingly applicable to the spectacle which now presented itself to my eyes, though, when I last beheld this unhappy man, he had been a victim to the same passions, a prey to the same undying remorse as now. Misery was at that time inscribed in legible characters upon his countenance. But now he appeared like nothing that had ever been visible in human shape. His visage was haggard, emaciated, and fleshless. His complexion was a dun and tarnished red, the colour uniform through every region of the face, and

suggested the idea of its being burnt and parched by the eternal fire that burned within him. His eyes were red, quick, wandering, full of suspicion and rage. His hair was neglected, ragged, and floating. His whole figure was thin to a degree that suggested the idea rather of a skeleton than a person actually alive. Life seemed hardly to be the capable inhabitant of so woe-begone and ghost-like a figure. The taper of wholesome life was expired; but passion and fierceness and frenzy were able for the present to supply its place.

I was to the utmost degree astonished and shocked at the sight of him.—He sternly commanded my conductors to leave the room

Well, sir, I have this day successfully exerted myself to save your life from the gallows. A fortnight ago you did what you were able to bring my life to that ignominious close.

Were you so stupid and undistinguishing as not to know that the preservation of your life was the uniform object of my exertions? Did not I maintain you in prison? Did not I endeavour to prevent your being sent thither? Could you mistake the bigoted and obstinate conduct of Forester in offering a hundred guineas for your apprehension for mine?

I had my eye upon you in all your wanderings. You have taken no material step through their whole course with which I have not been acquainted. I meditated to do you good. I have spilled no blood but that of Tyrrell: that was in the moment of passion, and it has been the subject of my uninterrupted and hourly remorse. I have connived at no man's fate but that of the Hawkinses: they could no otherwise have been saved than by acknowledging myself a murderer. The rest of my life has all been spent in acts of benevolence. I
meditated

meditated to do you good. For that reason I was willing to prove you. You pretended to act towards me with consideration and forbearance. If you had persisted in that to the end, I would yet have found a way to reward you. I left you to your own discretion. You might show the impotent malignity of your own heart, but in the circumstances in which you were then placed I knew you could not hurt me. Your forbearance has proved, as I all along suspected, empty and treacherous. You have attempted to blast my reputation. You have sought to disclose the select and eternal secret of my soul. Because you have done that, I will never forgive you. I will remember it to my latest breath. The memory shall survive me, when my existence is no more. Do you think you are out of the reach of my power, because a court of justice has acquitted you?

While Mr. Falkland was speaking, a sudden distemper came over his countenance, his whole frame was shaken by an instantaneous convulsion, and he staggered to a chair. In about three minutes he recovered.

Yes, said he, I am still alive. I shall live for days and months and years; the power that made me, of whatever kind it be, can only determine how long. I live the guardian of my reputation. That, and to endure a misery such as man never endured, are the only ends to which I live. But, when I am no more, my fame shall still survive. My character shall be revered, as spotless and unimpeachable by all posterity, as long as the name of Falkland shall be repeated in the most distant region of the many-peopled globe.

Having said this, he returned to the discourse which more immediately related to my future condition and happiness.

There

There is one condition, said he, upon which you may obtain some mitigation of your future calamity. It is for that purpose that I have sent for you. Listen to my proposals with deliberation and sobriety! Remember, that the insanity is not less to trifle with the resolved determination of my soul, than it would be to pull a mountain upon your head that hung trembling upon the edge of the mighty Appennine!

I insist then upon your signing a paper declaring in the most solemn manner that I am innocent of murder, and that the charge you alleged at the office in Bow-street is false, malicious and groundless. Perhaps you may scruple out of a regard to truth. Is truth then entitled to adoration for its own sake, and not for the sake of the happiness it is calculated to produce? Will a reasonable man sacrifice to barren truth, when benevolence, humanity and every consideration that is dear to the human heart require that it should be superseded! It is probable that I may never make use of this paper, but I require it as the only practicable reparation to the honour you have assailed. This is what I had to propose. I expect your answer.

Sir, answered I, I have heard you to an end, and I stand in need of no deliberation to enable me to answer you in the negative. You took me up a raw and inexperienced boy, capable of being moulded to any form you pleased. But you have communicated to me volumes of experience in a very short period. I am no longer irresolute and pliable. What is the power you retain over my fate I am unable to discover. You may destroy me; but you cannot make me tremble. I am not concerned to enquire whether what I have suffered flowed from you by design or otherwise, whether you were the author of my miseries or only con-
nived

nived at them. This I know, that I have suffered too exquisitely on your account, for me to feel the least remaining claim on your part to my making any voluntary sacrifice.

You say that benevolence and humanity require this sacrifice of me. No. It would only be a sacrifice to your mad and misguided love of fame, to that passion which has been the source of all your miseries, of the most tragical calamities to others, and of every misfortune that has happened to me. I have no forbearance to exercise towards that passion. If you be not yet cured of this tremendous and sanguinary folly, at least I will do nothing to cherish it. I know not whether from my youth I was destined for a hero; but I may thank you for having taught me a lesson of insurmountable fortitude.

What is it that you require of me? That I should sign away my own reputation for the better maintaining of yours. Where is the equality of that? What is it that casts me at such an immense distance below you, as to make every thing that relates to me wholly unworthy of consideration? You have been educated in the prejudice of birth. I abhor that prejudice. You have made me desperate, and I utter what that desperation suggests.

You will tell me perhaps that I have no reputation to lose, that, while you are esteemed faultless and unblemished, I am universally reputed a thief, a suborner and a calumniator. Be it so. I will never do any thing to countenance those imputations. The more I am destitute of the esteem of mankind, the more careful I will be to preserve my own. I will never from fear or any other mistaken motive do any thing of which I ought to be ashamed.

You

You are determined to be for ever my enemy. I have in no degree deserved this eternal abhorrence. I have always esteemed and pitied you. For a considerable time I rather chose to expose myself to every kind of misfortune, than disclose the secret that was so dear to you. I was not deterred by your menaces, (What could you make me suffer more than I actually suffered?) but by the humanity of my own heart; in which, and not in means of violence, you ought to have reposed your confidence. What is the mysterious vengeance that you can yet execute against me? You menaced me before; you can menace no worse now. You are wearing out the springs of terror. Do with me as you please! You teach me to hear you with an unshrinking and desperate firmness. Recollect yourself! I did not proceed to the act with which you reproach me till I was apparently urged to the very last extremity. I am now sorry that that step was ever adopted. But it seemed that I was treated with unrelenting rigour; and, urged to exasperation by unintermitted sufferings, I had no time to cool or to deliberate. Even at present I cherish no vengeance against you. All that is reasonable, all that can really contribute to your security, I will readily concede; but I will not be driven to an act repugnant to all reason, integrity, and justice.

Mr. Falkland listened to me with astonishment and impatience. He had entertained no previous conception of the firmness I displayed. Several times he was convulsed with the fury that laboured in his breast. Once and again he betrayed an intention to interrupt; but he was restrained by the collectedness of my manner, and perhaps by a desire to be acquainted with the entire state of my mind. Finding that I had concluded, he paused for

for a moment ; his passion seemed gradually to enlarge, till it was no longer capable of controul.

It is well ! said he, gnashing his teeth, and stamping upon the ground. You refuse the composition I offer ! I have no power to persuade you to compliance ! You defy me ! At least I have a power respecting you, and that power I will exercise ; a power that shall grind you into atoms. I condescend to no more expostulation. I know what I am, and what I can be. I know what you are, and what fate is reserved for you !

Saying this he quitted the room.

Such were the particulars of this memorable scene. The impression it has left upon my understanding is indelible. The figure and appearance of Mr. Falkland, his death-like weakness and decay, his more than mortal energy and rage, the words that he spoke, the motives that animated him, produced one compounded effect upon my mind that nothing of the same nature could ever parallel. The idea of his misery thrilled through my frame. How weak in comparison of it is the imaginary hell, which the great enemy of mankind is represented as carrying every where about with him !

From this consideration my mind presently turned to the menaces he had vented against myself. They were all mysterious and undefined. He had talked of power, but had given no hint from which I could collect in what he imagined it to consist. He had talked of misery, but had not dropped a syllable respecting the nature of the misery to be inflicted.

I sat still for some time ruminating on these thoughts. Neither Mr. Falkland, nor any other person appeared, to disturb my meditations. I rose, went out of the room, and from the inn

into the street. No one offered to molest me. It was strange ! What was the nature of this power from which I was to apprehend so much, yet which seemed to leave me at perfect liberty ? I began to imagine that all I had heard from this dreadful adversary was mere madness and extravagance, that he was at length deprived of the use of reason, which had long served him only as a medium of torment. Yet was it likely in that case that he should be able to employ Jones and his associate, who had just been his instruments of violence upon my person ?

I proceeded along the streets with considerable caution. I looked before me and behind me, as well as the darkness would allow me to do, that I might not again be hunted in sight by some man of stratagem and violence without my perceiving it. I was not as before beyond the limits of the town, but considered the streets, the houses and the inhabitants as affording some degree of security. I was still walking with my mind thus full of suspicion and forecast, when I discovered Thomas, that servant of Mr. Falkland whom I have already more than once had occasion to mention. He advanced towards me with an air so blunt and direct, as instantly to remove from me the idea of any thing insidious in his purpose ; beside that I had always felt the character of Thomas, rustic and uncultivated as it was, to be entitled to a more than common proportion of esteem.

Thomas, said I, as he advanced, I hope you are willing to give me joy that I am at length delivered from the dreadful danger which for many months haunted me so unmercifully.

No, rejoined Thomas roughly, I be not at all willing. I do not know what to make of myself

self in this affair. While you were in prison in that miserable fashion, I felt all at one almost as if I loved you : and, now that that is over, and you are turned out loose in the world to do your worst, my blood rises at the very sight of you. To look at you, you are almost that very lad Williams for whom I could with pleasure as it were have laid down my life ; and yet behind that smiling face there lie robbery, and lying, and every thing that is ungrateful and murderous. Your last action was worse than all the rest. How could you find in your heart to revive that cruel story about Mr. Tyrrel, which every body had agreed out of regard to the squire never to mention again, and of which I know and you know he is as innocent as the child unborn ? There are causes and reasons, or else I could have wished from the bottom of my soul never to have set eyes on you again !

And you still persist in your hard thoughts of me !

Worse ! I think worse of you than ever ! Before, I thought you as bad as man could be. I wonder from my soul what you are to do next. But you make good the old saying, When a man is once in ———.

And so there is never to be an end of my misfortunes. What can Mr. Falkland contrive for me worse than the ill opinion and enmity of all mankind ?

Mr. Falkland contrive ! He is the best friend you have in the world, though you are the basest traitor to him. Poor man ! it makes one's heart ache to look at him ; he is the very image of grief. And it is not clear to me that it is not all owing to you. At least you have given the finishing blow in behalf of the diseasethat already had him in its clutches. There have been the devil and all to pay
between

between him and squire Forester. The squire is right raving mad with my master, for having outwitted him in the matter of the trial, and saved your life. He swears that you shall be taken up and tried all over again at the next assizes; but my master is so resolute, that I believe he will carry it his own way. To see him ordering every thing for your benefit, and taking all your maliciousness as mild and innocent as a lamb, and then to think of your vile proceedings against him, is a sight one shall not see again, if one was to go all the world over. For God's sake, repent of your reprobate doings, and make what little reparation is in your power! Think of your poor soul, before you awake, as to be sure one of these days you will, in fire and brimstone everlasting!

Saying this, he held out his hand, and took hold of mine. The action seemed strange, but I at first thought of it as the unpremeditated result of his solemn and well-intended adjuration. I felt however that he put something into my hand. The next moment he quitted his hold, and hastened from me with the swiftness of an arrow. What he had thus given me was a bank-note of twenty pounds. I had no doubt that he had been charged to deliver it to me from Mr. Falkland.

What was I to infer? What light did it throw upon the intentions of my inexorable persecutor? His animosity against me was as great as ever; that I had just had confirmed to me from his own mouth. Yet his animosity appeared to be still tempered with the remains of humanity. He prescribed to it a line wide enough to embrace the gratification of his views, and within the boundaries of that line it stopped. But this discovery carried no consolation to my mind. I knew not what portion of calamity I was fated to endure, before his jealousy
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of dishonour and inordinate thirst of fame would deem themselves satisfied.

Another question offered itself. Was I to receive the money which had just been put into my hands? the money of a man, who had inflicted upon me injuries, less than those which he had entailed upon himself; but the greatest that one man can inflict upon another? who had blasted my youth, who had destroyed my peace, who had held me up to the abhorrence of mankind, and rendered me an outcast upon the face of the earth? who had forged of me the basest and most atrocious falsehoods, and urged them with a seriousness and perseverance which produced universal belief? who an hour before had vowed against me inexorable enmity, and sworn to entail upon me misery without end? Would not this conduct on my part betray a base and abject spirit, that crouched under tyranny, and kissed the hands that were embrued in my blood?

If these reasons appeared strong, neither was the other side without reasons in reply. I wanted the money: not for any purpose of vice or superfluity, but for those purposes without which life cannot subsist. Man ought to be able, wherever placed, to find for himself the means of existence: but I was to open a new scene of life, to remove to some distant spot, to be prepared against the ill-will of mankind, and the unexplored projects of hostility of a most accomplished foe. The actual means of existence are the property of all. What should hinder me from taking that of which I was really in want, when in taking it I risked no vengeance and perpetrated no violence? The property in question will be beneficial to me, and the voluntary surrender of it is accompanied with no injury to its late proprietor; what other condition can be
necessary

necessary to render the use of it on my part a duty? He that lately possessed it has injured me; does that alter its value as a medium of exchange? He will boast perhaps of the imaginary obligation he has conferred on me: Surely to shrink from a thing in itself right, from any such apprehension, can be the result only of pusillanimity and cowardice.

C H A P. XVII.

INFLUENCED by these reasonings, I determined to retain what had thus been put into my hands. My next care was in regard to the scene I should choose as the retreat of that life which I had just saved from the grasp of the executioner. The danger to which I was exposed of forcible interruption in my pursuits was probably in some respects less now, than it had been previously to this crisis. Beside, that I was considerably influenced in this deliberation by the strong loathing I conceived for the situations in which I had lately been engaged. I knew not in what mode Mr. Falkland intended to exercise his vengeance against me; but I was seized with so unconquerable an aversion to disguise and the idea of spending my life in the personating a fictitious character, that I could not for the present at least reconcile my mind to any thing of that nature. The same kind of disgust I had conceived for the metropolis, where I had spent so many hours of artifice and terror. I therefore decided in favour of the project which had formerly proved amusing to my imagination, of withdrawing to some distant, rural scene, a scene of calmness and obscurity, where for a few years at least, perhaps during the life of Mr. Falkland, I might be hidden from the world, recover the wounds my mind had received in this fatal connexion, methodise and improve the experience which had been accumulated, cultivate the faculties I in any degree possessed, and employ the intervals of these occupations

pations in simple industry and the intercourse of guileless, uneducated, kind-intentioned minds. The menaces of my persecutor seemed to forebode the inevitable interruption of this system. But I deemed it wise to put these menaces out of my consideration. I compared them to death, which must infallibly overtake us, we know not when; but the possibility of whose arrival next year, next week, to-morrow, must be left out of the calculation of him who would enter upon any important or well-concerted undertaking.

Such were the ideas that determined my choice. Thus did my youthful mind delineate the system of distant years, even when the threats of instant calamity still sounded in my ears. I was inured to the apprehension of mischief, till at last the hoarse roarings of the beginning tempest had no power to disturb my tranquillity. I however thought it necessary, while I was apparently within the sphere of the enemy, to exert every practicable degree of vigilance. I was careful not to incur the hazards of darkness and solitude. When I left the town, it was with the stage-coach, an obvious source of protection against glaring and enormous violence. Meanwhile I found myself no more exposed to molestation in my progress, than the man in the world who should have had the least reason for apprehensions of this nature. As the distance increased, I relaxed something in my precaution, though still awake to a sense of danger, and constantly pursued with the image of my foe. I fixed upon an obscure market-town in Wales as the chosen seat of my operations. This place recommended itself to my observation, as I was wandering in quest of an abode. It was clean, cheerful, and of great simplicity of appearance. It was at a distance from any public and frequented road,
and

and had nothing which could deserve the name of trade. The face of nature around it was agreeably diversified, being partly wild and romantic, and partly rich and abundant in production.

Here I solicited employment in two professions; the first that of a watch-maker, in which though the instructions I had received were but few, they were eked out and assisted by a mind fruitful in mechanical invention; the other that of an instructor in mathematics and its practical application, geography, astronomy, land-surveying and navigation. Neither of these was a very copious source of emolument in the obscure retreat I had chosen for myself: but, if my receipts were slender, my disbursements were still fewer. In this little town I became acquainted with the vicar, the apothecary, the lawyer, and the rest of the persons who time out of mind had been regarded as the top gentry of the place. Each of these centred in himself a variety of occupations. There was little in the appearance of the vicar that reminded you of his profession except on the recurring Sunday. At other times he condescended with his evangelical hand to guide the plough, or to drive the cows from the field to the farm-yard for the milking. The apothecary occasionally officiated as a barber, and the lawyer was the village school-master.

By all these persons I was received with kindness and hospitality. Among people thus remote from the bustle of human life there is an open spirit of confidence, by means of which, a stranger easily finds access to their benevolence and good-will. My manners had never been greatly debauched, by the scenes through which I had passed, from the simplicity of rural life; and the hardships I had endured gave additional mildness to my character.

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In the theatre upon which I was now placed I had no rival. My mechanical occupation had hitherto been a non-resident; and the schoolmaster, who did not aspire to the sublime heights of science I professed to discover, was very willing to admit me as a partner in the task of civilizing the unpolished manners of the inhabitants. For the parson, civilisation was no part of his trade; his business was with the things of a better life, not with the carnal concerns of this material scene; in truth, his thoughts were principally occupied with his oatmeal and his cows.

This scene had perhaps a more powerful handle upon my affections, than it would have had upon those of almost any other person with my degree of intellectual cultivation. I had had a profound experience, though a short one, of society such as ranks and regulations have constituted it. The simple scene of which I was now an inmate, the abode of gross and unsuspecting ignorance, bore a kind of rude resemblance to that simplicity which seems to be the goal of elevated and comprehensive reason. I bore with its grossness, the narrowness of its prospects and the uniformity of its impressions, in behalf of its freedom from malignity and deceit. How long I should have sat down contented with these defects in consideration of these advantages I am unable to pronounce. For the present, fore with persecution and distress, and bleeding at almost every vein, there was nothing I so much coveted as rest and tranquillity. It seemed as if my faculties were, at least for the time, exhausted by the late preternatural and vice-derived intensity of their exertions, and that they stood indispensably in need of a period of comparative suspension.

In this state, so grateful to my feelings, week after week glided away without interruption and alarm. Every day contributed to my progress in
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the esteem of my guileless neighbours. At first they looked upon me with wonder as a sort of non descript; but they were pleased to find upon farther acquaintance that I fell in for the most part with their habits and manners; and that, though I was able, if solicited, to inform them upon subjects extremely remote from their usual occupations, yet my superior knowledge gave me no inclination to dictate or domineer. The peculiarities in which I differed from them generated no aversion. My habits were more solitary and sedentary than those of any of my neighbours; but I state the simple and unornamented fact when I affirm, that my universal character among them was that of a person of great learning and knowledge, mild, even-tempered, and that would not hurt so much as a worm.

Thus tranquil, there were moments in which I even forgot there was such a person as Mr. Falkland in the world. The situation in which I was now placed was not very different from that in which I had spent my earlier years; and I began to look back upon the intervening period as upon a distempered and tormenting dream; or rather perhaps my feelings were like those of a man recovered from six months raging delirium, from ideas of horror, confusion, flight, persecution, agony and despair! When I recollected what I had undergone, it was not without some satisfaction as the recollection of a thing that was past; every day augmented my hope that it was never to return. Surely the dark and terrific menaces of Mr. Falkland were rather the perturbed suggestions of his angry mind, than the final result of a deliberate and digested system! How happy should I feel beyond what ordinarily falls to the lot of man, if, after the terrors and alarms I had undergone, I
found

found myself thus unexpectedly restored to the immunities of a human being !

While I was thus soothing my mind with fond imaginations, it happened that a few bricklayers and their labourers came over from a distance of five or six miles, to work upon some additions to one of the better sort of houses in the town which had changed its tenant. No incident could be more trivial than this, had it not been for a strange coincidence of time between this circumstance and a change which introduced itself into my situation. This first manifested itself in a sort of shyness with which I was treated first by one person and then another of my new-formed acquaintance. They were backward to enter into conversation with me, and answered my enquiries with an awkward and embarrassed air. When they met me in the street or the field, their countenance contracted a cloud, and they endeavoured to shun me. My scholars quitted me one after another, and I had no longer any employment in my mechanical profession. It is impossible to describe the sensations which the gradual, but uninterrupted progress of this revolution produced in my mind. It seemed as if I had some contagious disease, from which every man shrunk with alarm, and left me to perish unassisted and alone. I asked one man and another to explain to me the meaning of these appearances ; but every one avoided the task, and answered in an evasive and ambiguous manner. I sometimes supposed that it was all a delusion of the imagination ; till the repetition of the sensation, and still more the decay of my projected modes of subsistence, brought the reality too painfully home to my apprehension. There are few things that give a greater shock to the mind than a phenomenon in the conduct of our fellow men, of great importance

ance to our concerns, and for which we are unable to assign any plausible reason. I was like a tree struck with some fatal blight, from which one branch falls off after another, and leaves the naked trunk a monument of calamity and scorn. Incapable of assigning the cause of my disgrace, I was at times half inclined to believe that the change was not in other men, but that some alienation of my own understanding generated the horrid vision. I endeavoured to awake from my dream, and return to my former state of enjoyment and happiness; but in vain. To the same consideration it may be ascribed, that unacquainted with the source of the evil, observing its perpetual increase, and finding it so far as I could perceive entirely arbitrary in its nature, I was unable to ascertain its limits, or the degree in which it would finally overwhelm me.

In the midst however of the wonderful and seemingly inexplicable nature of this scene, there was one idea that instantly intruded itself, and that I could never after banish from my mind. It is Falkland! In vain I struggled against the seeming improbability of the supposition. In vain I said, Mr. Falkland, wise as he is and pregnant in resources, acts by human and not by supernatural means. He may overtake me by surprise and in a manner of which I have no previous expectation; but he cannot produce a great and notorious effect without some visible agency, however difficult it may be to trace that agency, to its absolute author. He cannot, like those invisible personages who are supposed from time to time to interfere in human affairs, ride in the whirlwind, shroud himself in clouds and impenetrable darkness, and scatter destruction upon the earth from his secret habitation. Thus it was that I bribed my imagination, and endeavoured to persuade myself that my present unhappiness

happiness originated in a different source from my former. All evils appeared trivial to me, in comparison of the recollection and perpetuation of my parent misfortune. I was little better than distracted between the incoherence of my ideas as to my present situation excluding from it the machinations of Mr. Falkland, and the horror I conceived at the bare possibility of again encountering his animosity, after a suspension of many weeks, a suspension as I had hoped for ever. An interval of weeks was an age to a person in the calamitous situation I had so long experienced. But, in spite of all my efforts, I could not banish from my mind the dreadful idea. My original conceptions of the genius and the perseverance of Mr. Falkland had been such, that I could with difficulty think that any thing was impossible to him. I knew not how to set up my own opinions of material causes and the powers of the human mind as the limits of existence. Mr. Falkland had always been to my imagination an object of wonder, and that which excites our wonder we scarcely ever suppose ourselves competent to analyse.

I was in this state of mind, and had already been compelled by the situation of my affairs to meditate the removing myself to a different residence, when a new circumstance occurred, that tended in part to dissipate the mist which hung over my understanding. In reality, nothing at this time appeared more necessary to me than information. Without some conception of the cause of my present misfortune I could not tell whither to remove, nor what precautions my interest obliged me to adopt. I was saved by the incident to which I allude from the necessity of proceeding entirely at random.

I returned one evening from a pedestrian excursion among the mountains. It is probable that my return was somewhat sooner than was usual with me

me upon similar occasions. Be that as it will, I found upon entering the house an apartment of which I occupied, that it was totally deserted of its usual inhabitants. The woman and her children were gone out to enjoy the freshness of the breeze. The husband was engaged in his usual without-door occupations. I opened for myself, and went into the kitchen of the family. Here, as I looked round, my eyes accidentally glanced upon a paper lying in one corner, which by some association I was unable to explain, roused in me a strong sensation of suspicion and curiosity. I eagerly went towards it, caught it up, and found it to be the very paper of the Wonderful and Surprising History of Caleb Williams, the discovery of which towards the close of my residence in London had produced in me such exquisite pain.

This discovery at once cleared up all the mystery that had hung upon my late transactions. Abhorred and intolerable certainty succeeded to the doubts which had haunted my mind. It struck me with the rapidity and irresistible effect of lightning. I was like a man blasted, his head bare and exposed to the fury of the elements.

Was there no hope that remained to me? Was acquittal useless? Was there no period, past or in prospect, that could give relief to my sufferings? Was the odious and atrocious falsehood that had been invented against me destined to follow me wherever I went, to strip me of character, to deprive me of the sympathy and good will of mankind, to wrest from me the very bread by which life must be sustained?

For the space perhaps of half an hour the agony I felt, from this termination to my late tranquillity, and the expectation it excited of that enmity which would follow me through every retreat, was
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so great as to bereave me of all consistent thinking and of the power of coming to any resolution. As soon as this hurricane of the mind subsided, and the winds that impelled me this way and that were still, one stiff and master gale took its turn of ascendancy, and drove me to an instant desertion of this once-cherished retreat. I had no patience to enter into remonstrance and explanation with the uninstructed inhabitants of my present residence. I had seen too much of the reign of triumphant falsehood to have that sanguine confidence in the effects of my innocence, which would have suggested itself to the mind of any other person of my propensities and my age. I could not endure the thought of opposing the venom that was thus scattered against me, in detail and through its minuter particles. If ever it should be necessary for me to encounter it, if I were pursued like a wild beast till I could no longer avoid turning upon my hunters, I would then turn upon the true author of this unprincipled attack. I would encounter the calumny in its strong hold, I would rouse myself to an exertion hitherto un essayed, and, by the firmness, intrepidity and unalterable constancy I should display, would yet compel mankind to believe that Mr. Falkland was a suborner and a murderer.

C H A P. XVIII.

I HASTEN to the conclusion of my melancholy story. I began to write soon after the period to which I have now conducted it. It has served me as a source of avocation for several years. For some time I had a melancholy consolation in writing. I was better pleased to repass in my mind the particulars of calamities that had formerly afflicted me, than to look forward, as at other times I was too apt to do, to those by which I might hereafter be overtaken. I conceived that my story faithfully digested would carry in it an impression of truth that few men would be able to resist; or at worst that, by leaving it behind me when I should no longer continue to exist, posterity might be induced to do me justice, and, seeing in my example what sort of evils are entailed upon mankind by society as it is at present constituted, might be inclined to turn their attention upon the fountain from which such bitter waters have been accustomed to flow. But these motives have diminished in their influence. I have contracted something too like a loathing for life and all its appendages. Writing, which was at first a pleasure, is changed into a burthen. I shall compress into a small compass what yet remains to be told.

I found out not long after the period of which I am speaking the precise cause of the mysterious reverse I had experienced in my residence in Wales, and included in that cause what it was I

had to look for in my future adventures. Mr. Falkland had taken the infernal Jones into his pay, a man in three respects most critically qualified for the service in which he was now engaged; by the unfeeling brutality of his temper, by the habits of his mind at once audacious and artful, and by the peculiar animosity and vengeance he had conceived against me. The employment to which this man was hired was that of following me from place to place for the purpose of blasting my reputation, and preventing me from the chance, by continuing long in one residence, of acquiring a character of integrity that might give new weight to any accusation I might at a future time be induced to prefer. He had come to the seat of my residence with the bricklayers and labourers I have mentioned; and, while he took care to keep out of sight so far as related to me, was industrious in disseminating that which in the eye of the world seemed to amount to a demonstration of the profligacy and detestableness of my character. It was, no doubt, from him that the detested scroll had been procured, which I had found in my habitation immediately prior to my quitting it. In all this Mr. Falkland, reasoning upon his principles, was only employing a necessary precaution. There was something in the temper of his mind that impressed him with aversion to the idea of violently putting an end to my existence; at the same time that unfortunately he could never deem himself sufficiently secured against my recrimination, so long as I remained alive. As to the fact of Jones being retained by him for this tremendous purpose, he by no means desired that it should become generally known; but then neither did he look upon the possibility of its being known with terror. It was already too notorious for his wishes, that I had
advanced

advanced the most odious charges against him. If he regarded me with abhorrence as the great adversary of his fame, those persons who had had occasion to be at all acquainted with our history, did not entertain less abhorrence against me for my own sake. If they knew all the pains he exerted in causing my evil reputation to follow me, they would consider it as an act of impartial justice, perhaps as a generous anxiety to prevent other men from being imposed upon and injured, as he had been.

What expedient was I to employ for the purpose of counteracting the meditated and barbarous prudence, which was thus destined in all changes of scene to deprive me of the benefits and consolations of human society? There was one expedient against which I was absolutely determined, disguise. I had experienced so many mortifications and such intolerable restraint when I had formerly had recourse to it, it was associated in my understanding with sensations of such acute anguish, that my mind was thus far entirely convinced: Life was not worth purchasing at so high a price! But, though in this respect I was wholly resolved, there was another point that did not appear to me so material, and in which therefore I was willing to accommodate myself to circumstances. I was contented, if that would insure my peace, to submit to the otherwise unmanly expedient of passing by a different name.

But the change of my name, the abruptness with which I removed from place to place, the remoteness and the obscurity which I proposed to myself in the choice of my abode, were all insufficient to elude the sagacity of Jones, or the unrelenting constancy with which Mr. Falkland incited my tormentor to pursue me. Whithersoever I removed myself, it was not long before I had occasion to

perceive this detested adversary in my rear. No words can enable me to do justice to the sensations which this circumstance produced in me. It was like what has been described of the eye of Omniscience pursuing the guilty sinner, and darting a ray that awakens him to new sensibility, at every moment when otherwise exhausted nature would lull him into a temporary oblivion of the reproaches of his conscience. Sleep fled from my eyes. No walls could hide me from the discernment of this hated foe. Every where his industry was unwearying to create for me new distress. Rest I had none : relief I had none : never could I count upon an instant's security : never could I wrap myself for a moment in the shroud of oblivion. The minutes in which I did not actually perceive him, were contaminated and blasted with the certain expectation of his speedy interference. In my first retreat I had passed some weeks of delusive tranquillity, but never after was I happy enough to attain so much as that shadowy gratification. I spent some years in this dreadful vicissitude of pain. My sensations at certain periods partook of insanity.

It has already appeared that I was not of a temper to endure calamity without endeavouring by every means I could devise to delude and disarm it. Recollecting, as I was habituated to do, the various projects by which my situation could be meliorated, the question in one instance occurred to me : Why should I be harassed by the pursuit of this Jones ; why, man to man, may I not by the powers of my mind attain the ascendancy over him ? at present he appears to be the persecutor and I the persecuted : is not this difference the mere creature of the imagination ? May I not employ my ingenuity to vex him with difficulties and laugh at the endless labour to which he will be condemned ?

Alas,

Alas, this is a speculation for a mind at ease ! It is not the persecution ; but the catastrophe which is annexed to it, that makes the difference between the tyrant and the sufferer ! In mere corporal exertion the hunter perhaps is upon a level with the miserable animal he pursues ! But could it be forgotten by either of us, that at every stage Jones was to gratify his malignant passions by disseminating charges of the most infamous nature and exciting against me the abhorrence of every honest bosom, while I was to sustain the still repeated annihilation of my peace, my character and my bread ? Could I by any refinement of my reason convert this dreadful series into sport ? I had no philosophy that qualified me for so extraordinary an effort. If under other circumstances I could even have entertained so strange an imagination, I was restrained in the present instance by the necessity of providing for myself the means of subsistence, and the fetters which through that necessity the forms of human society imposed upon my exertions.

In one of those changes of residence to which my miserable fate repeatedly compelled me, I met, upon a road which I was obliged to traverse, the friend of my youth, my earliest and best beloved friend, the venerable Collins. It was one of those misfortunes which served to accumulate my distress, that this man had quitted the island of Great Britain only a very few weeks before that fatal reverse of fortune which had ever since pursued me with unrelenting eagerness. Mr. Falkland, in addition to the large estate he possessed in England, had a very valuable plantation in the West Indies. This property had been greatly mismanaged by the person who had the direction of it on the spot ; and, after various promises and evasions on his part, which, however they might
serve

serve to beguile the patience of Mr. Falkland, had been attended with no salutary fruits, it was resolved that Mr. Collins should go over in person to rectify the abuses which had so long prevailed. There had even been some idea of his residing several years, if not settling finally, upon the plantation. From that hour to the present I had never received the smallest intelligence respecting him.

I had always considered the circumstance of his critical absence as one of my severest misfortunes. Mr. Collins had been one of the first persons even in the period of my infancy to conceive hopes of me as of something above the common standard, and had contributed more than any other to encourage and assist my juvenile studies. He had been the executor of the little property of my father, who had fixed upon him for that purpose in consideration of the mutual affection that existed between us; and I seemed on every account to have more claim upon his protection than upon that of any other human being. I had always believed that, had he been present in the crisis of my fortune, he would have felt conviction of my innocence; and, convinced himself, would by means of the venerableness and energy of his character have interposed so effectually, as to have saved me the greater part of my subsequent misfortunes.

No sight therefore could give me a purer delight than that which now presented itself to my eyes. It was some time however before either of us recognised the person of the other. Mr. Collins looked at least ten years older than he had done when I last saw him, in addition to which he was in his present appearance pale, sickly and thin. These unfavourable effects had been produced

duced by the change of climate, particularly trying to persons in an advanced period of life. Add to which, I supposed him to be at that moment in the West Indies. I was probably as much altered in the period that had elapsed as he had been. I was the first to recollect him. He was on horseback; I on foot. I had suffered him to pass me. In a moment the full idea of who he was rushed upon my mind: I ran; I called with an impetuous voice; I was unable to restrain the vehemence of my emotions.

The ardour of my feelings disguised my usual tone of speaking, which otherwise Mr. Collins would infallibly have recognised. His sight was already dim; he pulled up his horse till I should overtake him; and then said, Who are you? I do not know you.

My father! exclaimed I, embracing one of his knees with fervour and delight, I am your son! once your little Caleb, whom you a thousand times loaded with your kindness!

The unexpected repetition of my name gave a kind of shuddering emotion to my friend, which was however checked by his age, and the calm and benevolent philosophy that formed one of the most conspicuous of his habits.

I did not expect to see you! replied he. — I did not wish it!

My best, my oldest friend! answered I, respect blending itself with my impatience, Do not say so! I have not a friend any where in the whole world, but you! In you at least let me find sympathy and reciprocal affection! If you knew how anxiously I have thought of you during the whole period of your absence, you would not thus grievously disappoint me in your return.

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How is it, said Mr. Collins gravely, that you have been reduced to this forlorn condition? Was it not the inevitable consequence of your own actions?

The actions of others, not mine! Does not your heart tell you that I am innocent?

No. My observation of your early character taught me that you would be extraordinary. But unhappily all extraordinary men are not good men; that seems to be a lottery, dependent on circumstances apparently the most trivial.

Will you hear my justification? I am as sure as I am of my existence that I can convince you of my purity.

Certainly, if you wish it, I will hear you. But that must not be just now. I could have been glad to decline it wholly. At my age I am not fit for the storm, and I am not so sanguine as you in my expectation of the result. Of what would you convince me? That Mr. Falkland is a suborner and a murderer?

I made no answer. My silence was an affirmative to this question.

And what benefit will result from this conviction? I have known you a promising boy, whose character might turn to one side or the other as events should decide. I have known Mr. Falkland in his maturer years, and have always admired him as the living model of liberality and goodness. If you could change all my ideas, and show me that there was no criterion by which vice might be prevented from being mistaken for virtue, what benefit would arise from that? I must part with all my interior consolation, and all my external connections. And for what? What is it you propose? The death of Mr. Falkland by the hands of the hangman?

No.

No. I will not hurt a hair of his head, unless compelled to it by a principle of defence. But surely you owe me justice?

What justice? The justice of proclaiming your innocence? You know what consequences are annexed to that. But I do not believe I shall find you innocent. If you even succeed in perplexing my understanding, you will not succeed in enlightening it. Such is the state of mankind, that innocence when involved in circumstances of suspicion can scarcely ever make out a demonstration of its purity, and guilt can often make us feel an insurmountable reluctance to the pronouncing it guilt. Meanwhile for the purchase of this uncertainty I must sacrifice all the remaining comforts of my life. I believe Mr. Falkland to be virtuous, but I know him to be prejudiced. He would never forgive me even this accidental parley, if by any means he should come to be acquainted with it.

Oh, argue not the consequences that are possible to result! answered I impatiently. I have a right to your kindness; I have a right to your assistance!

You have them. You have them to a certain degree; and it is not likely by any process of examination you can have them entire. You know my habits of thinking. I regard you as vicious; but I do not consider the vicious as proper objects of indignation and scorn. I consider you as a machine: you are not constituted, I am afraid, to be greatly useful to your fellow men; but you did not make yourself; you are just what circumstances irresistibly compelled you to be. I am sorry for your ill properties; but I entertain no enmity against you, nothing but benevolence. Considering you in the light in which I at present consider you, I am ready to contribute every thing in my

power to your real advantage, and would gladly assist you, if I knew how, in detecting and extirpating the errors that have misled you. You have disappointed me, but I have no reproaches to utter : it is more necessary for me to feel compassion for you, than that I should accumulate your misfortune by my censures.

What could I say to such a man as this? Amiable, incomparable man ! Never was my mind more painfully divided than at that moment. The more he excited my admiration, the more imperiously did my heart command me, whatever were the price it should cost, to extort his friendship. I was persuaded that severe duty required of him, that he should reject all personal considerations, that he should proceed resolutely to the investigation of the truth, and that, if he found the result terminating in my favour, he should resign all his advantages, and, deserted as I was by the world, make a common cause, and endeavour to compensate the general injustice. But was it for me to force this conduct upon him, if, now in his declining years, his own fortitude shrunk from it ? Alas, neither he nor I foresaw the dreadful catastrophe that was so closely impending ! Otherwise I am well assured, that no tenderness for his remaining tranquillity would have withheld him from a compliance with my wishes ! On the other hand, could I pretend to know what evils might result to him from his declaring himself my advocate ? Might not his integrity be brow-beaten and defeated as mine had been ? Did the imbecility of his grey hairs afford no advantage to my terrible adversary in the contest ? Might not Mr. Falkland reduce him to a condition as wretched and low as mine ? After all, was it not vice in me to desire to involve another man as my champion ? If he could protect me,

me, had I not yet energy and wisdom and conscious purity enough to protect myself?

Influenced by these considerations, I assented to his views. I assented to be thought hardly of by the man in the world whose esteem I most ardently desired, rather than involve him in possible calamity. I assented to the resigning what appeared to me at that moment as the last practicable comfort of my life, a comfort upon the thought of which, while I surrendered it, my mind dwelt with undefinable longings. Mr. Collins was deeply affected with the apparent ingenuousness with which I expressed my feelings. The secret struggle of his mind was, Can this be hypocrisy? The individual with whom I am conferring, if virtuous, is one of the most disinterestedly virtuous persons in the world. We tore ourselves from each other. Mr. Collins promised, as far as he was able, to have an eye upon my vicissitudes, and to assist me in every respect that was at all consistent with a just recollection of consequences. Thus I parted as it were with my right arm; and voluntarily consented, thus maimed and forlorn, to encounter all the evils that were yet in store for me.

C H A P. XIX.

HAVING made an experiment of various situations, all of them with one uniform result, I at length determined to remove myself, if possible, from the reach of my persecutor, by going into voluntary banishment from my native soil. But it seemed this slender consolation was to be denied to me by the inexorable Falkland. At the time that the project was formed by me I was at no great distance from the east coast of the island, and I determined to take ship at Harwich, and pass immediately into Holland. I accordingly repaired to that place, and went almost as soon as I arrived to the port. But there was no vessel just at that time ready to sail. I left the port, and withdrew to an inn, where after some time I retired to a chamber. I was scarcely there, before the door of the room was opened, and the man, whose countenance was of all others most hateful to my eyes, Jones, entered the apartment. He shut the door again as soon as he entered.

Youngster, said he, I have a little private intelligence to communicate to you. I come as a friend, and that I may save you a labour-in-vain trouble. If you consider what I have to say in that light, it will be the better for you. It is my business now, do you see, for want of a better, to see that you do not break out of bounds. Not that I much matter having one man for my employer, or dancing attendance after another's heels; but I have a special

special kindness for you, for some good turns that you wot of, and therefore I do not stand upon ceremonies! You have led me a very pretty round already; and, out of the love I bear you, you shall lead me as much farther, if you will. But beware the salt seas! They are out of my orders. You are a prisoner at present, and I believe all your life will remain so. Thanks to the milk-and-water softness of your former master! if I had the ordering of these things, it should go with you in another fashion. As long as you think proper, you are a prisoner within the rules; and the rules with which the soft-hearted squire indulges you are all England, Scotland and Wales. But you are not to go out of these climates. The squire is determined you shall never pass the reach of his disposal. He has therefore given orders that, whenever you attempt so to do, you shall be converted from a prisoner at large to a prisoner in the properer meaning of the word. A friend of mine followed you just now to the harbour; I was within call; and, if there had been any appearance of your setting your foot from land, we should have been with you in a trice, and laid you fast by the heels. I would advise you for the future to keep at a proper distance from the sea, for fear of the worst. You see I tell you all this for your good. For my part I should be better satisfied, if you were in limbo, with a rope about your neck, and a comfortable bird's eye prospect to the gallows: but I do as I am directed; and so, good night to you!

The intelligence thus conveyed to me occasioned an instantaneous revolution in both my intellectual and animal system. I disdained to answer or take the smallest notice of the fiend by whom it was delivered. It is now three days since I received it,
and

and from that moment to the present my blood has been in a perpetual ferment. My thoughts wander from one idea of horror to another with incredible rapidity. I have had no sleep. I have scarcely remained in one posture for a minute together. It has been with the utmost difficulty that I have been able to command myself far enough to add a few pages to my story. But, uncertain as I am of the events of each succeeding hour, I thought it right to force myself to the performance of this task. All is not right within me. How it will terminate God knows. I sometimes fear that I shall be wholly deserted of my reason.

What—dark, mysterious, unfeeling, unrelenting tyrant!—is it come to this?—When Nero and Caligula swayed the Roman sceptre, it was a fearful thing to offend these bloody rulers. The empire had already spread itself from climate to climate, and from sea to sea. If their unhappy victim fled to the rising of the sun, where the luminary of day seems to us first to ascend from the waves of the ocean, the power of the tyrant was still behind him. If he withdrew to the west, to Hesperian darkness, and the shores of barbarian Thule, still he was not safe from his gore-drenched foe.—Falkland! art thou the offspring in whom the lineaments of these tyrants are faithfully preserved? Was the world with all its climates made in vain for thy helpless, unoffending victim?

Tremble!

Tyrants have trembled, surrounded with whole armies of their Janissaries! What should make thee inaccessible to my fury?—No, I will use no daggers! I will unfold a tale—! I will show thee for what thou art to the world, and all the men that live shall confess my truth!—Didst thou imagine that I was altogether passive, a mere worm, organized to feel sensations of pain, but no emotion of resentment? Didst thou imagine that
there

there was no danger in inflicting on me pains however great, miseries however dreadful? Didst thou believe me impotent, imbecil and idiot-like, with no understanding to contrive thy ruin, and no energy to perpetrate it?

I will tell a tale—! The justice of the country shall hear me! The elements of nature in universal uproar shall not interrupt me! I will speak with a voice more fearful than thunder!—Why should I be supposed to speak from any dishonourable motive? I am under no prosecution now! I shall not now appear to be endeavouring to remove a criminal indictment from myself, by throwing it back on its author!—Shall I regret the ruin that will overwhelm thee! Too long have I been tender-hearted and forbearing! What benefit has ever resulted from my mistaken clemency? There is no evil thou hast scrupled to accumulate upon me! Neither will I be more scrupulous! Thou hast shown no mercy; and thou shalt receive none!—I must be calm! Bold as a lion, yet collected!

This is a moment pregnant with fate. I know—I think I know—that I will be triumphant, and crush my seemingly omnipotent foe. But should it be otherwise, at least he shall not be every way successful. His fame shall not be immortal as he thinks. These papers shall preserve the truth: they shall one day be published, and then the world shall do justice on us both. Recollecting that, I shall not die wholly without consolation. It is not to be endured that falsehood and tyranny should reign for ever.

How impotent are the precautions of man against the eternally-existing laws of the intellectual world? This Falkland has invented against me every species of foul accusation? He has hunted me from city to city. He has drawn his lines of circumvallation round me that I may not escape. He has kept his
scenters.

scenters of human prey for ever at my heels. He may hunt me out of the world.—In vain! With this engine, this little pen I defeat all his machinations; I stab him in the very point he was most solicitous to defend!

Collins! I now address myself to you. I have consented that you should yield me no assistance in my present terrible situation. I am content to die rather than do any thing injurious to your felicity.—But, remember,—you are my father still!—I conjure you, by all the love you ever bore me, by the benefits you have conferred on me, by the forbearance and kindness towards you that now penetrates my soul, by my innocence—for, if these be the last words I shall ever write, I die protesting my innocence!—by all these or whatever tie more sacred has influence on your soul, I conjure you, listen to my last request! Preserve these papers from destruction, and preserve them from Falkland? It is all I ask! I have taken care to provide a safe mode of conveying them into your possession; and I have a firm confidence which I will not suffer to depart from me, that by some means or other they will one day find their way to the public!

The pen lingers in my trembling fingers!—Is there any thing I have left unsaid?—The contents of the fatal chest from which originated all my misfortunes I have never been able to ascertain. I once thought it contained some murderous instrument or relique connected with the fate of the unhappy Tyrrel. I am now persuaded that the secret it inclosed was a faithful narrative of that and its concomitant transactions to be reserved in case of the worst, that, if by any unforeseen event the guilt of Falkland should ever come to be fully disclosed, it might contribute to redeem the wreck of his reputation. But it is no matter. If Falkland shall never be detected to the satisfaction of the world,

world, such a narrative will probably never see the light. In that case this story of mine may amply, severely perhaps supply its place.

I know not what it is that renders me thus solemn. I have a secret foreboding as if I should never again be master of myself. If I succeed in what I now meditate respecting Falkland, my precaution in removing these papers will have been unnecessary; I shall no longer be reduced to artifice and evasion. If I fail, the precaution will appear to be wisely chosen.

POST-

P O S T S C R I P T.

ALL is over. I have carried into execution my meditated attempt. My situation is totally changed; I now sit down to give an account of it. For several weeks after the completion of this dreadful business, my mind was in too tumultuous a state to permit me to write. I think I shall now be able to arrange my thoughts sufficiently for that purpose. Great God! how wondrous, how terrible are the events that have intervened since I was last employed in a similar manner! It is no wonder that my thoughts were solemn, and my mind filled with horrible forebodings!

Having formed my resolution, I set out from Harwich for the metropolitan town of the county in which Mr. Falkland resided. Jones I well knew was in my rear. That was of no consequence to me. He might wonder at the direction I pursued, but he could not tell with what purpose I pursued it. My design was a secret carefully locked up in my own breast. It was not without a sentiment of terror that I entered a town which had been the scene of my long imprisonment. I proceeded to the house of the chief magistrate the instant I arrived, that I might give no time to my adversary to counterwork my proceeding.

I told him who I was, and that I was come from a distant part of the kingdom for the purpose of rendering him the medium of a charge of murder
against

against my former master. My name was already familiar to him. He answered that he could not take cognizance of my deposition, that I was an object of universal execration in that part of the world, and he was determined upon no account to be the vehicle of my depravity.

I warned him to consider well what he was about. I called upon him for no favour; I only applied to him in the regular exercise of his function. Would he take upon him to say that he had a right at his pleasure to suppress a charge of this complicated nature? I had to accuse Mr. Falkland of repeated murders. The perpetrator knew that I was in possession of the truth upon the subject; and, knowing that, I went perpetually in danger of my life from his malice and revenge. I was determined to go through with the business, if justice were to be obtained from any court in England. Upon what pretence did he refuse my deposition? I was in every respect a competent witness. I was of age to understand the nature of an oath; I was in my perfect senses; I was untarnished by the verdict of any jury, or the sentence of any judge. His private opinion of my character could not alter the law of the land. I demanded to be confronted with Mr. Falkland, and I was well assured I should substantiate the charge to the satisfaction of the whole world. If he did not think proper to apprehend him upon my single testimony, I should be satisfied if he only sent him notice of the charge and summoned him to appear.

The magistrate finding me thus resolute, thought proper a little to lower his tone. He no longer absolutely refused to comply with my requisition, but condescended to expostulate with me. He represented to me Mr. Falkland's health which had for some years been exceedingly indifferent, his
having

having been already once brought to trial, upon the same accusation, the diabolical malice in which alone my proceeding must have originated, and the tenfold ruin it would bring down upon my own head. I should be pilloried for perjury, if not hanged for the robbery, in relation to which Mr. Falkland had so generously spared me upon a former occasion. To all these representations my answer was short. I was determined to go on, and would abide the consequences. A summons was at length granted, and notice sent to Mr. Falkland of the charge preferred against him.

Three days elapsed before any farther step could be taken in this business. This interval in no degree contributed to tranquillise my mind. The thought of preferring a capital accusation against, and hastening the death of such a man as Mr. Falkland, was by no means an opiate to reflexion. At one time I commended the action, either as just revenge (for the benevolence of my nature was in a great degree turned to sour), or as necessary self-defence, or as that which in an impartial and philanthropical estimate included the smallest evil. At another time I was haunted with doubts. But, spite of these variations of sentiment, I uniformly determined to persist; I felt as if impelled by an unconquerable necessity. The consequences were such as might well appal the stoutest heart. Either the ignominious execution of a man whom I had once so deeply venerated, and whom now I sometimes suspected not to be without his claims to veneration; or a confirmation, perhaps an increase, of the calamities I had so endured. Yet these I preferred to a state of uncertainty. I desired to know the worst; to put an end to the hope, however faint, which had been so long my torment; and above all to exhaust and finish the catalogue of expedients

pedients that were within my disposition. My mind was worked up to a state little short of frenzy. My body was in a burning fever with the agitation of my thoughts. When I laid my hand upon my bosom or my head, it seemed to scorch them with the fervency of its heat. I could not sit still for a moment. I panted with incessant desire that the dreadful crisis I had so eagerly invoked were come, and were over.

After an interval of three days I met Mr. Falkland in the presence of the magistrate to whom I had applied upon the subject. I had only two hours notice to prepare myself, Mr. Falkland seeming as eager as I to have the question brought to a crisis, and laid at rest for ever. I had an opportunity before the examination to learn that Mr. Forrester was gone upon some business on an excursion to the continent, and that Collins, whose health when I saw him was in a very precarious state, was at this time confined with alarming illness. His constitution had been wholly broken with his West Indian voyage. The audience I met at the house of the magistrate consisted of several gentlemen and others selected for the purpose, the plan being to find a medium between the suspicious air of a private examination, and the indelicacy as it was styled of an examination exposed to the remark of every accidental spectator.

I can conceive of no shock greater than that I received from the sight of Mr. Falkland. His appearance on the last occasion on which we met had been haggard, ghost-like and wild, energy in his gestures and frenzy in his aspect. It was now the appearance of a corpse. He was brought in in a chair unable to stand, fatigued and almost destroyed by the journey he had just taken. His visage was colourless; his limbs destitute of motion, almost
of

of life. His head reclined upon his bosom, except that now and then he lifted it up and opened his eyes with a languid glance, immediately after which he sunk back into his former apparent insensibility. He seemed not to have three hours to live. He had kept his chamber for several weeks; but the summons of the magistrate had been delivered to him at his bed-side; his orders respecting letters and written papers being so peremptory that no one dared to disobey them. Upon reading the paper he was seized with a very dangerous fit; but, as soon as he recovered, he insisted upon being conveyed with all practicable expedition to the place of appointment. Falkland in the most helpless state was still Falkland, firm in command, and capable to extort obedience from every one that approached him.

What a sight was this to me! Till the moment that Falkland was presented to my view, my breast was steeled to pity. I thought that I had coolly entered into the reason of the case (passion in a state of solemn and omnipotent vehemence always appears to be coolness to him in whom it domineers); and that I had determined impartially and justly. I believed that, if Mr. Falkland were permitted to persist in his schemes, we must both of us be completely wretched. I believed that it was in my power by the resolution I had formed to throw my share of this wretchedness from me, and that his could scarcely be increased. It appeared therefore to my mind to be a mere piece of equity and justice, such as an impartial spectator would desire, that one person should be miserable in preference to two, that one person rather than two should be incapacitated from acting his part, and contributing his share to the general good. I thought that in this business I had risen superior to personal considerations,

derations, and judged with a total neglect of the miserable suggestions of self-regard. It is true Mr. Falkland was mortal: but, notwithstanding his apparent decay, he might live long. Ought I to submit to waste the best years of my life in my present wretched situation? He had declared that his reputation should be for ever inviolate; this was his ruling passion, the thought that worked his soul to madness. He would probably therefore leave a legacy of persecution to be received by me from the hands of Jones or some other villain equally atrocious, when he should himself be no more. Now or never was the time for me to redeem my future life from endless woe.

But all these fine-spun reasonings vanished before the object that was now exhibited to me. Shall I trample upon a man thus dreadfully reduced? Shall I point my animosity against one whom the system of nature has brought down to the grave? Shall I poison with sounds the most intolerable to his ears the last moments of a man like Falkland? It is impossible. There must have been some dreadful mistake in the train of argument that persuaded me to be the author of this hateful scene. There must have been a better and more magnanimous remedy to the evils under which I groaned.

It was too late. The mistake I had committed was now gone past all power of recal. Here was Falkland solemnly brought before a magistrate to answer a charge of murder. Here I stood, having already declared myself the author of the charge, gravely and sacredly pledged to support it. This was my situation; and, thus situated, I was called upon immediately to act. My whole frame shook. I would eagerly have consented that that moment should have been the last of my existence. I how-
ever

ever believed that the conduct now most indispensably incumbent on me, was to lay the emotions of my soul naked before my hearers. I looked first at Mr. Falkland, and then at the magistrate and attendants, and then at Mr. Falkland again. My voice was suffocated with agony. I began :

Why cannot I recal the four last days of my life ? How was it possible for me to be so eager, so obstinate in a purpose so diabolical ? Oh, that I had listened to the expostulations of the magistrate that hears me, or submitted to the well-meant despotism of his authority ! Hitherto I have only been miserable ; henceforth I shall account myself base ! Hitherto, though hardly treated by mankind, I stood acquitted at the bar of my own conscience. I had not filled up the measure of my wretchedness !

Would to God it were possible for me to retire from this scene without uttering another word ! I would brave the consequences—I would submit to any imputation of cowardice, falsehood and profligacy, rather than add to the weight of misfortune with which Mr. Falkland is overwhelmed. But the situation and the demands of Mr. Falkland himself forbid me. He, in compassion for whose fallen state I would willingly forget every interest of my own, would compel me to accuse, that he might enter upon his justification.—I will confess every sentiment of my heart.

No penitence, no anguish can expiate the folly and the cruelty of this last act I have perpetrated. But Mr. Falkland well knows—I affirm it in his presence—how unwillingly I have proceeded to this extremity. I have revered him ; he was worthy of reverence : I have loved him ; he was endowed with qualities that partook of divine.

From the first moment I saw him, I conceived for him the most ardent admiration. He condescended

scended to encourage me; I attached myself to him with all the fulness of affection. He was unhappy; I exerted myself with youthful curiosity to discover the secret of his woe. This was the beginning of misfortune.

What shall I say?—He was indeed the murderer of Tyrrel; he suffered the Hawkineses to be executed, knowing that they were innocent, and that he alone was guilty. After successive surmises, after various indiscretions on my part and indications on his, he at length confided to me at full the fatal tale!

Mr. Falkland! I most solemnly conjure you to recollect yourself! Did I ever prove myself unworthy of your confidence? The secret was a most painful burthen to me; it was the extremest folly that led me unthinkingly to gain possession of it; but I would have died a thousand deaths rather than betray it. It was the jealousy of your own thoughts, and the weight that hung upon your mind, that led you to watch my motions, and conceive alarm from every particle of my conduct.

You began in confidence; why did you not continue in confidence? The evil that resulted from my original imprudence, would then have been comparatively little. You threatened me: did I then betray you? A word from my lips at that time would have freed me from your threats for ever. I bore them for a considerable period, and at last quitted your service, and threw myself a fugitive upon the world in silence. Why did you not suffer me to depart? You brought me back by stratagem and violence, and wantonly accused me of an enormous felony; did I then mention a syllable of the murder, the secret of which was in my possession?

Where is the man that has suffered more from the injustice of society than I have done? I was accused of a villainy that my heart abhorred. I was sent to jail. I will not enumerate the horrors of my prison, the lightest of which would make the heart of humanity shudder. I looked forward to the gallows! Young, ambitious, fond of life, innocent as the child unborn, I looked forward to the gallows! I believed that one word of resolute accusation against my master would deliver me, yet I was silent, I armed myself with patience, uncertain whether it were better to accuse or to die. Did this shew me a man unworthy to be trusted?

I determined to break out of prison. With infinite difficulty and repeated miscarriages I at length effected my purpose. Instantly a proclamation with a hundred guineas reward was issued for apprehending me. I was obliged to take refuge among the scum of mankind, in the midst of a gang of thieves. I encountered the most imminent peril of my life when I entered into this retreat, and when I quitted it. Immediately after I travelled almost the whole length of the kingdom in poverty and distress, in hourly danger of being retaken and manacled like a felon. I would have fled my country; I was prevented. I had recourse to various disguises; I was innocent, and yet was compelled to as many arts and subterfuges as could have been entailed on the worst of villains. In London I was as much harassed and as repeatedly alarmed, as I had been in my flight through the country. Did all these persecutions persuade me to put an end to my silence? No: I suffered them with patience and submission; I did not make one attempt to retort them upon their author.

I fell

I fell at last into the hands of the miscreants that are nourished with human blood. In this terrible situation I for the first time attempted by turning informer to throw the weight from myself. Happily for me the London magistrate listened to my tale with insolent contempt.

I soon and long repented of my rashness and rejoiced in my miscarriage. I acknowledge that in various ways Mr. Falkland shewed humanity towards me during this period. He would have prevented my going to prison at first; he contributed to my subsistence during my detention; he had no share in the pursuit that had been set on foot against me; he at length procured my discharge when brought forward for trial. But a great part of his forbearance was unknown to me; I supposed him to be my unrelenting pursuer. I could not forget that, whoever heaped calamities on me in the sequel, they all originated in his forged accusation.

The prosecution against me for felony was now at an end. Why were not my sufferings permitted to terminate then, and I allowed to hide my weary head in some obscure yet tranquil retreat? Had I not sufficiently proved my constancy and fidelity? Would not a compromise in this situation have been most wise and most secure? But the restless and jealous anxiety of Mr. Falkland would not permit him to repose the least atom of confidence. The only compromise that he proposed was, that with my own hand I should sign myself a villain. I refused this proposal, and have ever since been driven from place to place, deprived of peace, of honest fame, even of bread. For a long time I persisted in the resolution that no emergency should convert me into the assailant. In evil hour I at last listened to my resentment and impatience, and
the

the hateful mistake into which I fell has produced the present scene.

I now see that mistake in all its enormity. I am sure that, if I had opened my heart to Mr. Falkland, if I had told to him privately the tale that I have now been telling, he could not have resisted my reasonable demand. After all his precautions, he must ultimately have depended upon my forbearance. Could he be sure that, if I were at last worked up to disclose every thing I knew, and to inforce it with all the energy I could exert, I should obtain no credit? If he must in **every** case be at my mercy, in which mode ought he to have sought his safety, in conciliation or in inexorable cruelty?

Mr. Falkland is of a noble nature. Yes; in spite of the catastrophe of Tyrrel, of the miserable end of the Hawkinses, and of all that I have myself suffered, I affirm that he has qualities of the most admirable kind. It is therefore impossible that he could have resisted a frank and fervent expostulation, the frankness and the fervour in which the whole soul was poured out. I despaired, while it was yet time to have made the just experiment; but my despair was criminal, was treason against the sovereignty of truth.

I have told a plain and unadulterated tale. I came hither to curse, but I remain to bless. I came to accuse, but am compelled to applaud. I proclaim to all the world that Mr. Falkland is a man worthy of affection and kindness, and that I am myself the worst of villains! Never will I forgive myself the iniquity of this day. The memory will always haunt me, and embitter every hour of my existence. In thus acting I have been a murderer, a cool, deliberate, unfeeling murderer.—I have said what my accursed precipitation has obliged me
to

to say. Do with me as you please ! I ask no favour. Death would be a kindness, compared to what I feel !

Such were the accents dictated by my remorse. I poured them out with uncontrollable impetuosity, for my heart was pierced, and I was compelled to give vent to its anguish. Every one that heard me was petrified with astonishment. Every one that heard me was melted into tears. They could not resist the ardour with which I praised the great qualities of Falkland ; they manifested their sympathy in the tokens of my penitence.

How shall I describe the feelings of this unfortunate man ? Before I began, he seemed sunk and debilitated, incapable of any strenuous impression. When I mentioned the murder, I could perceive in him an involuntary shuddering, though it was counteracted partly by the feebleness of his frame, and partly by the energy of his mind. This was an allegation he expected, and he had endeavoured to prepare himself for it. But there was much of what I said, of which he had had no previous conception. When I expressed the anguish of my mind, he seemed at first startled and alarmed lest this should be a new expedient to gain credit to my tale. His indignation against me was great for having retained all my resentment towards him thus, as it might be, in the last hour of his existence. It was increased, when he discovered me, as he supposed, using a pretence of liberality and sentiment, to give new edge to my hostility. But, as I went on, he could no longer resist. He saw my sincerity ; he was penetrated with my grief and compunction. He rose from his seat supported by the attendants, and—to my infinite astonishment—threw himself into my arms !

Williams,

Williams, said he, you have conquered ! I see too late the greatness and elevation of your mind. I adore the qualities that you now display, though to those qualities I owe my ruin. I could have resisted any plan of malicious accusation you might have brought against me. But I see that the artless and manly story you have told, has carried conviction to every hearer. All my prospects are concluded. All that I most ardently desired is for ever frustrated. I have spent a life of the basest cruelty to cover one act of momentary vice and to protect myself against the prejudices of my species. I stand now completely detected. My name will be consecrated to infamy, while your heroism, your patience and your virtues will be for ever admired. You have inflicted on me the most fatal of all mischiefs, but I bless the hand that wounds me. And now,—turning to the magistrate—and now, do with me as you please. I am prepared to suffer all the vengeance of the law. You cannot inflict on me more than I deserve. You cannot hate me more than I hate myself. I am the most execrable of all villains. I have for years (I know not how long) dragged on a miserable existence in insupportable pain. I am at last, in recompense for all my labours and my crimes, dismissed from it, with the disappointment of my only remaining hope, the destruction of that for the sake of which alone I consented to exist. It was worthy of such a life, that it should continue just long enough to witness this final overthrow. If however you wish to punish me, you must be speedy in your justice; for, as reputation was the blood that warmed my heart, so I feel that death and infamy must seize me together.

I record the praises bestowed on me by Falkland, not because I deserve them, but because they
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serve to aggravate the baseness of my cruelty. He survived but three days this dreadful scene. I have been his murderer. It was fit that he should praise my patience, who has fallen a victim, life and fame, to my precipitation! It would have been merciful in comparison, if I had planted a dagger in his heart! He would have thanked me for my kindness. But, atrocious, execrable wretch that I have been! I wantonly inflicted on him an anguish a thousand times worse than death. Meanwhile I endure the penalty of my crime. His figure is ever in imagination before me. Waking or sleeping I still behold him. He seems mildly to expostulate with me for my unfeeling behaviour. I live the devoted victim of conscious reproach. Alas! I am the same Caleb Williams that but ten days before boasted, that, however great were the calamities I endured, I was still innocent.

Such has been the result of a project I formed for delivering myself from the evils that had so long attended me. I thought that, if Falkland were dead, I should return once again to all that makes life worth possessing. I thought that, if the guilt of Falkland were established, fortune and the world would smile upon my efforts. Both these events are accomplished; and it is only now that I am truly miserable.

Why should my reflections perpetually centre upon myself? self, an overweening regard to which has been the source of my errors! Falkland, I will think only of thee, and from that thought will draw ever-fresh nourishment for my sorrows! One generous, one disinterested tear I will consecrate to thy ashes! A nobler spirit lived not among the sons of men. Thy intellectual powers were truly sublime, and thy bosom burned with a godlike ambition. But of what use are talents and sentiments
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in the corrupt wilderness of human society? It is a rank and rotten soil from which every finer shrub draws poison as it grows. All that in a happier field and a purer air would expand into virtue and germinate into general usefulness, is thus converted into henbane and deadly nightshade.

Falkland! thou fettedst out in thy career with the purest and most laudable intentions. But thou imbibedst the poison of chivalry with thy earliest youth: and the base and low-minded envy that met thee on thy return to thy native seats, operated with this poison to hurry thee into madness. Soon, too soon, by this fatal coincidence were the blooming hopes of thy youth blasted for ever! From that moment thou only continuedst to live to the phantom of departed honour. From that moment thy benevolence was in a great part turned into rankling jealousy and inexorable precaution. Year after year didst thou spend in this miserable project of imposture; and only at last continuedst to live long enough to see, by my misjudging and abhorred intervention, thy closing hope disappointed, and thy death accompanied with the foulest disgrace!

I began these memoirs with the idea of vindicating my own character. I have now no character that I wish to vindicate: but I will finish them that thy story may be fully understood; and that, if those errors of thy life be known which thou so ardently desiredst to conceal, the world may at least not hear and repeat a half-told and mangled tale.

FINIS.



